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COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

No. 62
August 1998

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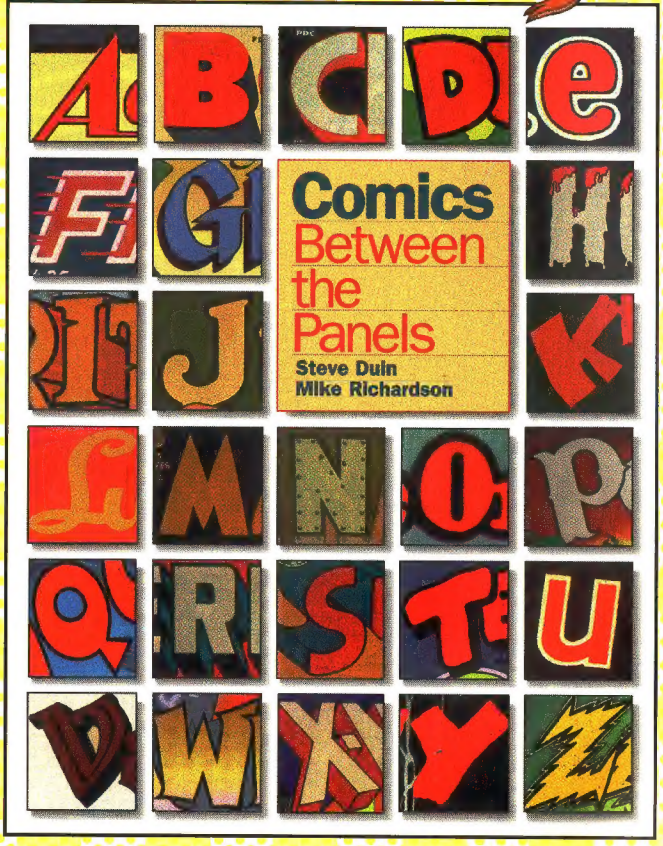

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by Steve Duin and Mike Richardson

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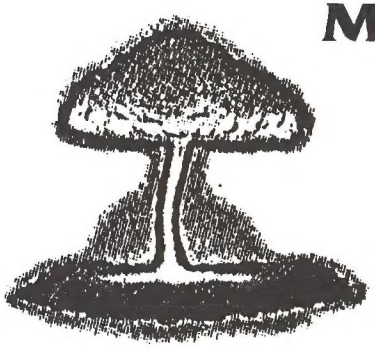

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35 VF- min.rest wht .$300
47 VF- ow $600
65 FN- crmy $125
84 FN+ ow $125
96 VF ow $300
102 VF ow $300
111 VF+ ow $400
Adventure
84 VF ow $600
95 VF- crmy $450
96 VF+ ow $650
100 FN- ow $250
All Star Western
10 VF+ ow $175
Amazing Spider-Man
129 NM ow $125
Atomic War
3 VF/NM ow $375
Batman
10 VF- ow $900
30 VF+ w $700
100 FN min.rest.
ow $400
Black Magic
1 VF- crmy $375
Blue Bolt Weird Tales
116 NM
min.rest. w $270
Boy Comics
17 VF+ w $250
Comics Cavalcade
16 NM- w $850
18 NM w $950
Crack
23 FN (dbl.cov) crmy $175
Fantastic Four
2 VF- ow $800
48 VF- crmy $450
Faust
1 NM w $42
Flash Comics
65 VF- w $350
Ghost Rider
1 (20¢) NM w $65
Great Comics
1 (LBC) VF+ ow $250
Green Lantern (GA)
11 VF- crmy $500
13 VF- w $625
14 VF+ w $750
18 VF- (min.rest) crmy $450
19 NM w $1500
24 MT- w $1350
27 VF w $750
29 NM w $1450
36 VF- crmy $625
Human Torch
38 VG+ ow $175
Law Against Crime
1 FN+ crmy $175
Leading
6 VF ow $375
Man Hunt
6 VF ow $145
More Fun
97 VF/NM $650
100 NM $1500
National
5 VG+ crmy $300
Real Clue
Vol.2#5 FN/VF
sl.tan $100
Showcase
4 FN unrest.
beauty $7000
Smash
14 FN/VF ow $700
Tim Holt
11 FN/VF
crmy $160
Overstreet Price Guides
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3 VF+ soft $200
4 NM hard $450
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GREEN LANTERN 5
GREEN LANTERN 30

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DC

Action Comics
17 VG sm.rep. $660
27 VG/FN sm.rep. $395
28 GD+ $240
32 FN $300
39 GD $110
104 VF/NM sm. pencil name ..$425
119 VG+ $115

Adventure Comics
53 GD $167
70 GD- $120
106 VF+ Owl 9 $495
126 VF/NM ..$450
130 VG $96
150 FN Owl 10+ $140
208 VF/NM wht.pgs. $275
218 FN/VF ...$107
257 VF $98

All American Comics
21 VG 3rd Atom
6th GL $435
73 VF/NM sm. name $525
75 VF+ pencil name ..$500
76 FN+ $250
77 VF/NM pencil name sm. rep. .$350
82 FN/VF sm. name $250

All American Men of War
6 FN+ $160
8 FN $107
10 VF/NM $265
13 VF- $180
16 FN+ $149

All Star
2 VG cld $900
4 coverless o/w VF $150
11 FN n.o.c. ..$780
14 VG $425
26 FN/VF $500
29 VF $695

All Star Western
58 (#1) FN+ ...$156

Aquaman
1 FN $189
2 FN $78
3 VF+ $135

Batman
3 GD+ min.rest. $950
6 GD $350
12 GD+ $315
13 VG+ $625
14 GD $240
15 VG sm.pc.tape o/w nice $380
32 FN- $230
40 VF/NM sm. pencil name .$1100

Batman Annuals
1 VG $100
2 VF $210
3 FN/VF $140

Blackhawk
14 VG $116
86 VF $110
110 VF/NM ...$140

Brave & The Bold
6 FN/VF $177
28 FN 1st JLA $1075
28 GD+ $540
29 FN $510
30 VG $300
34 GD 1st Hawkman .$150
36 FN $108
42 FN+ $125
43 FN $100

Comic Cavalcade
2 FN- $195

Congo Bill
3 VG $118

Dale Evans
5 NM/MT Hawkeye copy .$295
8 NM Hawkeye copy $275

Detective Comics
39 FR POFC-Ws $295
42 VG nice pages Ws $395
62 VG cleaned & pressed $370
65 GD $240
87 GD+ $110
113 FN $183
119 FN+ $270
129 FN+ $255
138 VG $185
177 FN- $110
190 VG origin .$122
213 FN Mirrorman ...$160
225 coverless ..$95
227 VF $350
228 VF- $190
246 VF $195
250 FN+ $112

Flash Comics (GA)
87 VF/FN $250

Flash (SA)
105 (#1) GD+ .$498
108 FN- $149
109 FN $123
117 VF $240
137 VF JSA x-over ...$325

Frontier Fighters
1 VG+ $125
2 FN $120

Green Lantern (SA)
2 VG+ $160
9 VF- $115
14 VF $120
15 VF $120
40 FN $123

House of Mystery
4 FN+ solid ...$210
143 VF- $140

Jackie Gleason
9 FN/VF $155

Jimmy Wakely
2 VF+ Hawkeye copy . $350

Justice League
2 VG $124
3 VG+ $127
12 VF+ $185
15 VF $160
16 FN/VF $79
18 VF+ $150
19 VF $140
21 FN+ $139

Leading Comics
1 GD/GD- $325
34 NM name ..$100
36 NM name ..$100

Leave It To Binky
5 VF sm.name superman $100

Legends of Daniel Boone
1 FN+ $225

More Fun Comics
88 FN $318

My Greatest Adventure
8 FN/VF $140
9 FN+ $135
14 VF+ $200
84 VF $100

New Comics
(becomes Adventure Comics)
4 VG rest. $695
5 GD- $550
6 GD+ $695
8 VG+ $895
9 FN rare nice .$995
10 GD- $395
11 VG/VF has ad for Det. #1 ...$950

Our Army At War
18 VF $220
27 VF/NM $195
3 VF+ $180

Our Fighting Forces
2 VF rare this nice $395
9 VF $165

Robin Hood
8 VF/NM $200
9 NM92 Owl 9.5 $210
11 VF $150

Sensation Comics
14 VG $160
67 VF sm.name $200

Sgt. Bilko
4 VF $176

Sgt. Bilko

Pvt. Doberman
1 FN $108
2 VF+ $175

Showcase
3 FN $198
12 FN $345
13 GD/VG $425
14 FN Flash .$1000
16 VG+ $185
17 VG $300
19 VG $185
22 VG $560
24 FN $339
24 VG- $170
27 VG $120
28 FN/VF $150
35 FN/VF $270
36 VF solid ...$400
37 FN+ $210
38 VF+ $375
39 VF $260
40 FN/VF $135
41 VF $140
60 FN+ Spectre $105

Star Spangled Comics
15 GD+ $160
72 VF sm. name $395
117 FN+ $132
122 FN+ scarce $145

Star Spangled War
28 VF $120
90 VG+ 1st Dino iss. ..$110

Strange Adventures
4 VG $150
14 FN $141
15 FN+ $210
16 FN+ $210
17 NM92 ....$425
20 FN+ $210
35 FN/VF $163
184 VF $100

Sugar & Spice
7 VG+ scarce .$110

Superman
11 VG+ $410
12 VG/FN $410
26 FN- $250
30 GD+ $225
41 VG+ $150
42 VG?FN $155
45 GD+ $105
47 VF $425
48 FN $189
52 FN+ $230
56 VF/NM (w) .$470
59 VF+ (w) ...$450
76 FN $425
79 VG/FN $112
81 FN+ $197
85 FN $126
89 FN $126
100 FN $480
101 FN+ $123
126 VF $160

Annual Giant Superman
2 FN/VF $160

Superman's Time Capsule
1955 FN $142

Superman'sPal Jimmy Olsen
7 FN $95
26 VF $100

Tales of the Unexpected
18 FN+ $95
20 VF/NM $180
22 VF+ $190
23 VF- $100
34 VF $95

Wonder Woman
3 GD- $140
48 VF?NM Hawkeye sm.tr.rep. $265

World's Finest
3 VG/FN $675
4 VG $422
6 GD+ $230
8 FN- $370
9 VG+ $360
13 FN $333
22 VF w/2 trs. ..$180
55 VF- $275
78 FN/VF $135
100 FN $90

Marvel • Atlas Timely

Amazing Adventures
3 VG/FN wht. pgs. $99

Amazing Adult Fantasy
7(#1) GD/VG ..$75
8 VG $90
10 FN $115
11 VG $80
13 VG/FN $100

Amazing Spider-Man
1 GD/VG $1050
2 GD- $195
4 GD $138
6 GD- 1st Lizard $89
8 FN+ $295
12 VG/FN $100
18 FN $100
23 FN $95
129 FN/VF $70
King Size 2 FN/VF $110

Avengers
1 GD+ $270
2 VG $104
4 GD+ 1st SA C.A. $175

Captain America (GA)
3 GD+ great rest. potential $ 1800
11 FN $870
36 FR readable $149

Captain America (SA)
100 FN/VF $110

Combat Casey
6(#1) VF $80

Conan
1 VF $150
3 VF $96

Daredevil
5 VF- $110

Fantastic Four
1 VG+ nice pags solid $1875
4 FN+ $936
5 GD $225
6 GD+ $185
7 FN/VF $280
8 VF- $385
9 VG $128
10 FN+ $275
11 VF- $325
17 VF $240
19 VF $240
48 VG $142

Human Torch
5 VG/FN tr.rep. $1100

Incredible Hulk
1 FN 1st Hulk $1950
2 GD/VG $27
4 GD+ $160
6 GD+ $240

Iron Fist
14 VF 1st Sabretooth ...$110

Journey into Mystery
83 VG $560

Silver Surfer
1 FN/VF $180
4 VF/NM $395

Strange Tales
80 VF $130
101 FN Torch begins $220
109 VF+ $150
111 VF lt.fox ..$240
Annual #1 (1962) FN $117

Tales of Suspense
15 FN $80
20 FN $80
33 VF $130
41 VF mc $400
43 FN $95
47 VF- $95

Tales to Astonish
11 FN $75
12 VF $190
15 FN $96
16 FN $85
20 FN $75
22 VF- $85
31 VF $130
35 FN $300
36 VG $95
38 FN $96
39 VF- $180
46 VF $11
49 VF 1st Giantman lt.fox $130

X-Men
2 VG $280
3 FN+ $240
4 VG+ $125
15 FN+ $105

Young Allies
20 NM pencil name-super copy ..$1100

Misc. Gold & Silver Age

America's Greatest Comics
3 VG $166

Atoman (1946)
1 VF/NM glossy $385

Black Terror
15 FN/VF nice .$170

Blue Beetle
2 FR/GD $90

Boy's Ranch
6 NM S&K ...$140

Bulletman
16 VG $120

Brenda Starr
7 FN+ (four stat) $235
15 FN (Charlton) $90

Captain Marvel
22 FN $225

Classics Illustrated
16 VF Hrn15 ..$375

Crusaders from Mars
1 VG Owl 10 ..$125

Daredevil (Lev)
4 GD $140
18 VG origin ..$210
38 VG/FN $90

Dollman
1 FN $750

Exciting Comics
47 VF white pgs. $275

Four Color
141 VF/NM MM$200
142 NM B.Bunny $150
178 GD+ 1st U$ $135
191 VF/NM P.Pig $100
194 VF+ M.Mouse $150
203 FN D.Duck $129
231 VF M.Mouse $120
261 VF M.Mouse $120
348 VF+ D.Duck $150

Green Lama
3 FN+ $225
4 FN+ $225

Haunt of Fear
5 VG $99

Hello Pal
2 FN- Charlie McCarthy $115

Hopalong Cassidy
13 VF+ $135

Howdy Doody
2 FN+ $145

Ibis the Invincible
5 VF/NM $395

Jackie Gleason (St.John)
2 FN+ $210

Joe Louis
1 FN/VF $225

Little Lulu in Paris
1 NM GK giant $120

MAD (EC)
1 GD/VG $575

Man from U.N.C.L.E.
1 VF $125

Miracle Comics
4 w/sm.tr. $180

Our Flag Comics
2 GD- 1st app. the Flag $90

Out of this World
7 VF/NM Giant Owl 10 .....$200

Personal Love
25 FN+ Frazetta $160
32 VF/NM Kirk Douglas $375

Planet
18 GD $111

Plastic Man
51 VF $160
61 VF/NM $190

Police Comics
11 VF89 ....$1450
26 FN $175
91 VF $120

Raggedy Ann & Andy
2 VF $104

Red Mountain
nn VF $130

Ricky Nelson
FC 998 VF+ ..$190

Rocky Lane
2 FN $108

Sears Toy Catalog
1964 FN/VF ..$225

Shadow Comics
V7#11 FN+ ...$180

Slave Girl (Avon)
2 VG $140

Spy Smasher
2 GD $140

Starr Flagg Undercover Girl
5(#1) FN/VF very nice $160

Star Trek (GK) ....
3 VF $160
4 VF $160
5 VF.NM $190
6 VF- $85
9 VF $120

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Super Comics
5 VG $146

The Thing (Char)
16 FN/VF $180

Three-D Comics
House of Terror
1 VF $120

3-Dimension Comics
Jungle Thrills 1 FN has glasses LB Cole $150

Tom Mix (Ralston)
2 GD $90
4 VG $115
7 FN $170
8 FN $170

Unknown Worlds (ACG)
1 VF89 .....$160

WDC&S
56 FN+ $110
88 VF $160
89 VF $120
98 VF $185
100 VF $120

Weird Horrors
9 FN $98

Western Thrillers
1 VG/FN $100

White Indian
11 VF $110

Whiz
10 FR $90
33 NM90 Owl 9.5 .....$440

Wow Comics
10 VF89 ....$500

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CONTENTS

Volume 2 • Number 62 • August 1998
A Gemstone Publication

DEPARTMENTS

Letter from the Editor 8
Marketplace Mail 10
Back Issues 14
Coming Next Issue 14
Contest Winner! 66
Advertiser's Index 73
Subscription Info. 79

FEATURES

Dobie Gillis!
Like man…it's Maynard's good buddy… you dig? by Dave Blanchard 28

Barks Discovery!
The mystery of the lost ducks! As told to Michael Naiman 36

Joe Simon!
Will Murray's humorous interview with the great comic book legend! 38

Fighting American!
The Atom Age's greatest costumed commie fighter! by Gene Reed 42

The Stars of Star Studded Comics!
Captain Combat, Red Rogue, & Ghost Woman are saved from obscurity! John Fallon 61

COLUMNS

Adventures Into Weird Words
Pre-Code Atlas creatures! by Pat S. Calhoun 19

Nolan's Notebook
A Timely experiment in Female Fables! by Michelle Nolan 23

Schiffman Market Report
The more we know… the more we want! by Matt Schiffman 64

CBM Forum
Good restoration doesn't always mean good conservation! by Tracey Heft 80

Fandom Flashbacks
Nation-Wide Nickel Know-How! Contributed by Shawn Hamilton ..... IBC

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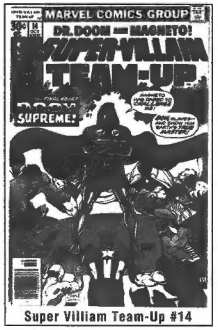
Issue Number #62, August 1998



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Superman- 349

JIM APARO
Adventure - 452 (Aquaman)
Aquaman #62, 63
Brave & Bold-130, 136
Manbat-2
Showcase #94,95,96 (Doom Patrol)

RICH BUCKLER
Action #478, 483
All Star Comics #69
DC Super Stars #10 (Strange Sports)
Freedom Fighters #9, 10, 14
Justice League #148, 158
Kamandi - 47, 50, 52, 56, 60
Secret Society Super Villans
#6-9, 11-15
Secret Society Sup. Vill. Spectacular
(DC Special Series #6)
Superman #327
Super Team Family #8 (Challenger(s)
New Gods #14, 15
Teen Titans (Old) #50 - 53

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Thor #262

SAL BUSCEMA
Hulk #207 (Interior Pages)

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Avengers #166 (Pgs- 1-3) ,
181 (Interiors), 186 -190
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Champions #11 (Pgs. 1 - 3)
Champions #12 (Pgs. 2-3)
Iron Man #109
Secret Origins Annual #1
(Doom Patrol)
*Super Villian Team #Up #14
(Doc Doom/ Magneto)
(I will pay stupid $ for this cover!!!)
*X-Men #108 - 142
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9 (Man Behind the Gun)
Flash #243
Kamandi #45, 48, 49
Secret Society Super Villains - 1 - 5
Teen Titans (Old) #44
Champions #17
Invaders #29

DAVE COCKRUM
Avengers #169, 175, 177
Hulk #207
Iron Man #110
Marvel Premier #48 (Antman)
Star Wars #17
Super Villian Team- Up #12
(Doom / Red Skull)
X-Men - G.S. - 1, 94 - 142
(Most Covers & Interiors, but, especially cover to #109)

GENE COLAN
Tomb of Dracula #62- 64
What if #17 (Old) (Ghost Rider, Capt. Marvel, Spiderwoman)

DICK DILLIN
DC presents #13, 14
DC Superstars #10 (Strange Sports)
(Interior Pages)
Justice League #143, 144, 147, 148
(Covers + Int. pgs.), 168, 171

STEVE DITKO
Shade the Changing Man #3

KIETH GIFFEN
Defenders #44 (Interior Pages)

DICK GIORDANO
Batman #300
Superboy + Legion #253, 254, 257

MIKE GOLDEN
Micronauts #2 - 11
(especially cover to - 7)

MIKE GRELL
Green Lantern #92, 100
Superboy + Legion #228, 230

BOB HALL
Super Villian Team #Up #14
(Interior pages)

RICK HOBERG
Star Wars #2

CARMINE INFANTINO
Star Wars #14, 15, 19, 22

GIL KANE
Capt. America #216
Champions #11, 16
Jungle Action (Black Panther) #14
Star Wars #8

MIKE KALUTA
Batman Family #17

JACK KIRBY
Capt. America #202
(cover + page - 14)
Defenders #44
Fantastic Four - 190
Invaders #14, 15
Weird Wonder Tales #18

ALAN KUPPERBERG
Invaders #37, 38

BOB LARKIN
Dazzler #1

BOB LAYTON
Iron Man #121, 127, 135, 139
Marvel Premier #47 (Antman)

GARCIA LOPEZ
Action #481, 482, 484
DC Special Series #5
(Superman Spect.), 11 (Flash Spect.)
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PABLO MARCOS
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BOB MCLEOD
Marvel Team #Up #86

AL MILGROM
All Star comics #70
Amazing Spiderman #194
Capt. Marvel #47
Defenders #74
Firestorm (Old) #2, 3
Flash - 268
Kamandi #53 - 55
Secret Society Super Villans #10
Shogun Warriors #3
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MIKE NASSER
Kobra #6, 7
Spectacular Spiderman #37

DON NEWTON
New Gods #12 (Splash Page)
Avengers #Annual #9

GEORGE PEREZ
**Avengers #160-165, 166-168, 170-174, 181, 183-185, 191, 192, 194-201 (Especially #161,167, 171, 181)
Avengers Ann. #8 (Int. pages #167) (cover to Korvac TPBK)
(*no one will pay more for Perez Avengers covers than me!)
Crisis Infinite Earths #1 - 12
(Contact me Kevin E….)
Justice League #195, 197, 207, 209, 219, 220
(other JLA covers considered)
(centerfold from JLA #195)
Marvel Two In One - 42, 50, 51, 57, 58, 61 - 63
New Teen Titans #1 - 50, Annual #3
(*also looking for "odd-ball" titles Perez did from 1975 - 1987 such as Marvel Premier w/ Man Wolf, F F.,X-Men, etc)

KEITH POLLARD
Iron Man #108, 111, 112
Marvel Two In One #55

FRANK ROBBINS
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JOHN ROMITA JR.
Avengers #176
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Iron Man #113 - 117

ALEX ROSS
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Kingdom Come
(various pages considered)

K. SCHAFFENBERGER
Action #474

MARSHALL ROGERS
Mr. Miracle - DC
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(also #19 - 25)

ALEX SCHOMBURG
Invaders annual #1
(also Human Torch pages)

JOE STATON
All Star Comics #71-74
"DC Explosion" - DC
House advertisement page - 1978
New Gods #19
Showcase #97, 99 (Power Girl)
100 (Anniversary issue)
Superboy + Legion #249

HERB TRIMPE
Godzilla #3, 21

DAVE WERZEL
Avengers #177 (Interiors)

ALAN WEISS
Shazam #(1977) #34

WALLY WOOD
All Star Comics #64

RON WILSON
Marvel Two in One #16

UNKNOWN ARTISTS
Invaders #41
Marvel Spotlight #12 (Son of Satan)
Super Villian Team-Up #15
(Doom vs. Red Skull)

Avengers #167

Avengers #181

Avengers #171

JLA #148

Iron Man #109

Seizing the opportunity...

Preparing for the 1998 San Diego Con, I am struck by the incredible longevity of the annual event. Who could've imagined back in 1970 that this seminal gathering of collectors, huxters, and creators would now be the largest and most attended ever. As I stuff this one last book into another white longbox, my mind travels back to the many incredible experiences and great people I've met at the Con over the years.

I recall the earliest Con at the University of California at San Diego campus up in La Jolla. There my father, brother and I bought more than 10,000 10¢ 1950's books for a whopping penny apiece. (It took us 4 hours and 5 carloads to haul them all home!) At the 1972 Con (now at the El Cortez), we met Bruce Hamilton for the first time and purchased the last few *Batman* issues we needed from him. And there was the memorable 1973 Con over on Shelter Island (across from the SD airport). We completed our *More Fun* collection that year, with the able assistance of Frazetta researcher Larry Bigman.

Then it was back to the El Cortez Hotel as the regular location for the Con. The view of that "giant" dealers' room (the largest I had ever seen at the time) will always stay in my memory... because the room seemed to have the amazing ability to supply any book you could ever want. In those days it was usually not very difficult to find an issue that you needed (they were around). The big problem was almost always raising the money to buy it. Those wonderful years at the El Cortez (especially the mid '70s) are treasured memories to me... and I'll never get over how much material was available, how inexpensive it all seemed, and how I naively thought the steady stream of rare memorabilia would never end.

The next era of SD Cons were held at the old "downtown" SD Community Concourse. Even bigger than the El Cortez, the dealers' room seemed to go on for acres... (that's because it actually WAS acres!) At the Concourse, we collectors and dealers got our first taste of "professional" exhibiting (and all the rules and regulations that went with it). It was a radical change in attitude for all of us, and we never returned to the more innocent and devil-may-care "flea market" approach to shows.

It was also at the Concourse that a I witnessed a parade of living history... so many creators that will never grace a convention floor again. Just about every famous writer, artist, and publisher one can imagine visited the Con over the years, and I tried to meet them all. But even though I recognized their names and their contributions, I didn't realize that the '80s would be the last Cons for most of these greats. I was too shortsighted and wasted literally hundreds of opportunities to interview, document... and most of all thank these legends of the industry... as most would pass away before the end of the decade. For myself, I will always remember the community Concourse years of the San Diego Con as a shameful waste of once-in-a-lifetime opportunities with legendary creators that were recklessly squandered and can never be retrieved.

As the 1990s dawned, the Con moved to its present location at the San Diego Convention Center. Every time I stand at the entrance to the brightly lighted and gigantic dealers' room, I can't help thinking of the other SD Cons that have gone before... and all the living history that has roamed the isles of the dealers' rooms over the years.

I wonder who's here this year... and I wonder if anyone is seizing the opportunity to interview, document... and most of all thank these legends of the industry....

Gary

Gary M. Carter, Editor

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Superman, the Israeli warrior god

I'm presently researching any and all usages of Yiddish or Jewish speech or culture found in pre-1965 comics (I'm writing an academic article for a Yiddish magazine.) My collaborators, who will write the Yiddish analysis, are academics and include my wife, Susannah. Any help from CBM's many reader/historians would be a great help!

It's relatively common knowledge among comic book afficionados that the American comic industry was created and dominated by Jews. To this day, Jews have a disproportionate presence in the industry. This seems to be typical of any intellectual or media-oriented business in America.

Draw from it what conclusions you will (I would argue against any) but the concrete result for me as a child was that my favorite comics were filled with Yiddish-isms, or "Yiddish-kite" as the linguistic and cultural thinkers would call it (per my co-authors on this article).

Comics really began around 1937. Jewish kids Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster created the ultimate Jew, Superman. He was a glasses-wearing nerd on the day job, but secretly was an Israeli warrior god. He came from an alien culture where people dressed in vaguely middle-eastern outfits and spoken a language always written in odd scribbles that resembled Arabic script (this convention was introduced in the '60s by Jewish editor Mort Weisinger).

The Superman-Batman comics line, National, merged with the Jewish M.C. Gaines Flash-Green Lantern line, All-American, to form "DC Comics." In the '50s, M.C. Gaines' son, William, took over the remainder of the family line and developed Entertaining Comics (EC) into a marketplace leader. The books he created (Vault of Horror, Weird Science Fiction, MAD Magazine) continue to have a presence in TV and movies.

In the '40s, one of the Jewish owners of Timely hired his 17 year-old nephew, Stanley Lieberman, who in turn ended up writing and editing artist Jacob Kurtzberg. Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, as they became known, worked for Timely as it became Atlas and then Marvel, where they created a pantheon of introspective sensitive heroes that includes Spider-Man, The Hulk, The Fantastic Four, The X-Men, and many, many more.

Along the way Jack Kirby, working with another Jewish partner, Joe Simon, also created Captain America and the entire genre of romance comics. So is it any wonder that comics were filled with Yiddish-related terms and phrases?

At Marvel, Benjamin Grimm, the Fantastic Four's Thing, was fond of cursing people and objects as "FURSHLUGINER." Even at DC, which was the blandest and most culturally-mainstreamed company around, odd phrases would pop up, such as Supergirl saying "WHAT GIVES?" At EC, any time an alien spoke, it was in a yiddish-flavored gibberish salted with these two phrases (which became an in-joke at EC) "SPA FON and SQUA TRONT."

At EC's MAD Magazine, thanks to writer Harvey Kurtzman and later Al Feldstein, Dr. Frank N. Stein's assistant read a yiddish newspaper and more yiddish showed up "POTREZEBIE SCHMEK" or "SMEK" or "SMEKITTY-SMEK" (a sound effect) plus "MELVIN OF THE APES," "LITTLE ORPHAN MELVIN," "SMILIN MELVIN" and a dog named "SCHLEP."

And there's more. If you know of any references, please take a moment to email me at linkyaco@aol.com thanks again CBMers!

Link Yaco, New York

Lee Falk at the Zoo!

The Australian Comic Convention is here in Sydney, Sept. 27-28. Why not take a vacation and stay down under at the con? Yanks Harley Yee and Ron Trimble are already with us. (How I dream of San Diego! We gotta stop with the babies already!)

Could you forward an unashamedly fan-type letter to Mr. Schaffenberger. He's kind of a hero of mine. Well done in CBM #59!

CBM gets better and better. A thousand times well done! Your editorial note at the end of the letters page re: the "Worldwide CBM Family" was very kind and appreciated. Best Regards.

Tony Didio, New South Wales, Australia

PS. I just got an invite to meet Lee Falk in Sydney in Sept.—how great! It's a dinner at the zoo where famous Aussies (and me) meet one of our greatest heroes. *(Continued on page 12)*

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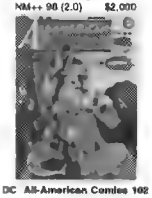

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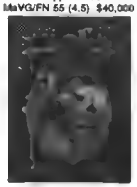

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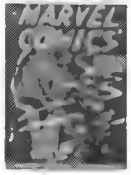

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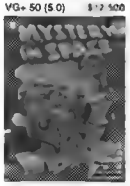

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Superman / C
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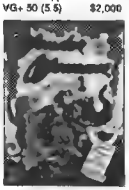
DC Superman 10
5th App Luthor (Bald)
VF/NM 90 (3.0) $3,500



DC Wonder Woman 9
Mile High
M 100 (2.0) $4,750

MVL X-Men 1
Winnipeg Copy, 1st App X-Men
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Continued from page 10

Edgy or hip

Have been a ACG fan forever. I always enjoyed the "Letters to the Editor" columns. Whoever wrote the responses had a very pleasing, easy-going style that sounded more like casual conversation. Whether you realize it or not, your responses take on that casual, friendly ACG style. I find that refreshing in this day and age where everyone thinks their writing or conversation must be "edgy" or "hip."

On another topic; I operate a small town sporting goods store, where I have a small comic display for fun more than anything. I sell mostly 1970's comics for 50¢ each. I have many regular 10-12 year olds who prefer old comics to new comics because they can read one comic for 15 minutes rather than 3 minutes with a current one. They really enjoy good stories that many times begin and end in the same comic.

Dennis Henkel, Illinois

Shocked and Saddened

Although his passing was not unexpected since he was in poor health in recent years, I was shocked and saddened upon reading Gary Carter's tribute to Alex Schomburg in CBM #60's Letter From The Editor.

With over 500 Golden Age comic book covers to his credit (masterpieces, all), it is difficult to impossible to choose a personal favorite. Sub-Mariner #1 comes to mind, depicting an angry Prince Namor lifting a German U-boat out of the sea, spilling the Nazi crew into the ocean against a canary yellow sky. A magnificent work of art by possibly the greatest cover artist of all, Alex Schomburg.

Several years ago, I wrote a full-page letter of praise to Mr. Schomburg regarding his outstanding pencils on Sub-Mariner #1 as well as his countless contributions to comic books. At that time, Alex was too ill to be answering fan mail, but he responded to my letter with an autographed backing board which simply read "Alex Schomburg, 1996." His signature is a cornerstone to my comic book collection, and is one of my most prized possessions.

I strongly advise fandom to seek out the art legacy of Alex Schomburg. Gerber's Photo-Journal Guide To Comic Books is highly recommended. Also check out Steve Duin's brilliant article on the life and work of Alex Schomburg in CBM #5 (an updated version was part of CBM #26), a lasting tribute to Schomburg's genius.

There's an old saying... "They just don't make 'em like they used to..." talent such as Mr. Schomburg possessed flowers every million years or so. We will not see another like him in our lifetime.

On another topic, I have uncovered some very interesting data on a very fascinating comic book which precedes *(Continued on page 15)*

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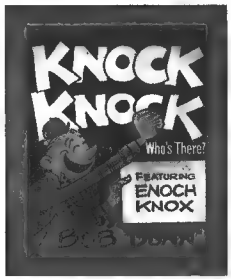
MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 12

Action #1 by two years. After much research, I have determined that Knock Knock #801 is Whitman Publications' very first comic book, not Mammoth Comics #1 from 1938 as is currently listed in the Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide. It is also important to note that the indicia on the splash page in Knock Knock #801 reads as follows:



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There is absolutely no mention of Gerona Publications (as co-publisher, listed as such in current Overstreet Guide), which leads me to conclude that Knock Knock #801 is the bridge or "missing link" between Whitman's Big Little Book #700 series (The World War In Photographs #779) is too close to Knock Knock #801 to be coincidental.

There are also two cover variations: (1) As shown in Gerber's Photo-Journal Guide to Comic Books, the cover has a green border with the 10¢ cover price clearly shown at the top margin.

(2) The second version has grey borders on both front and back covers with no 10¢ cover price shown anywhere.

Knock Knock #801 should be recognized for its small, but pivotal role as Whitman Publications' singular transition from Big Little Books to comic books, and also enjoying the distinction of being Whitman Publications' very first comic book.

John Mlachnik, Minnesota

Harvey war comics

Answer to Jeff Bass' query concerning Harvey war comics: Harvey did indeed publish war comics besides Sad Sack. War Battles, Warfront, Fighting Fronts, and Joe Palooka's Battle Adventures are some of the titles Harvey published in the early fifties, utilizing such artists as Wally Wood, Jack Kirby, and the recently deceased Lee Elias.

I recently purchased a copy of Fighting Fronts #1, featuring an explosive Elias cover, and some surprisingly lurid violence inside. These war books are, in my opinion, overlooked and underappreciated.

Michael Neno, Ohio

Bravo Tony G.

You guys are the best. Reed Crandall AND the Blackhawks, wake me up, I'm dreaming. CBM is like the old TV show "Can You Top This?" Each month your magazine is filled with terrific articles and some fabulous cover shots. Tony Gleeson's article on the Reed Crandall pre-Code Blackhawks was fantastic. I've been a fan of the Blackhawks since my high school days (many moons ago) when my friend, Eric, introduced me to the swashbuckling group of heroes. His nickname to this day is Blackhawk. Keep up the good work, you're the best.

Dennis M. Benedict, New York

Archival tape?

CBM has been spotlighting pulp collecting recently, so let's take a look at that. A few months ago in another publication I saw an advertisement auctioning off some Weird Tales which were described as having "protective archival tape" on the spines. I laughed out loud.

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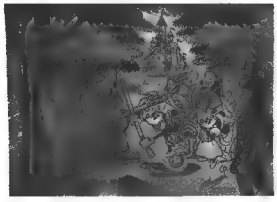

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MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 15

I called up another pulp collector and read it to him and he laughed, too. I've never heard of "archival tape," and if anyone has, feel free to end my ignorance.

What I do know about Weird Tales pulps is that in 1995 a large collection began being sold from a collector's estate. Many of them, while in the best condition of any pulps I've ever seen, virtually all had in common the fact that the complete spine of the pulp was covered with a 3/4" length of Scotch tape. Some of them had magic tape on them while others had the old type of cellophane tape which turns brown and the glue melts through the cover of the book as the years go by. It was considered a shame that these pulps had been degraded and devalued in this way.

At auction they went in lots for an average of $30 an issue. At the 1997 Pulpcon I bought a January 1935 Weird Tales from a dealer which was clearly from this collection. It was in beautiful condition, except for the tape all down the spine. I bought it for the dealer's asking price of $25. Without the tape an issue of WT in that superb condition would have been an easy $80 to $100.

Why would some dealers feel they can somehow get away with this "archival tape" sham? In comics, if you had a mint comic, would the fact that it had tape on the entire spine be a minor consideration? Would calling it "archival tape" ease the pain? Or would the taped spine reduce the value of the book dramatically? It does on any kind of book I've ever encountered.

I think this dealer knew better, but was trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Or perhaps he thought that comics fans would think the rules are different for pulps.

They're not.

While a pulp price guide is in the works, I think the publisher may be disappointed in his desire to attract comic book fans to the pulp collecting arena in any large numbers. The serious comic book collectors want high grade (near mint or better) books, and while a mint comic book is not uncommon, mint pulps are extremely uncommon. (Will Murray doesn't believe that there is any such thing as a mint pulp.)

The obstacle to having a mint pulp is that most pulps were published with pages which had ragged edges, including an oversized cover. The cover bends down over the edges of the pages due to this and unless you bought it off the stands yourself in 1935, it's not going to remain mint. Many comic book collectors just won't buy a

book if it isn't at least near mint, which would make it a true rarity in the pulp field.

Comics fans also tend to be drawn to what Will Murray calls "eye candy," and all that pulps have going for them, in some cases, are colorful covers, but not many have much in the way of good artwork on interior illustrations, and there are very few interior illos even then. Pulps are mostly text, and are closer to paperbacks than comic books if you want to compare them to anything.

James Van Hise, California

The French connection

Quick note to congratulate your staff on another superb issue, packed with insightful features and great graphics.

Can I please, please, PLEASE, put in a vote for another CBM Special/Annual or "Best of CBM." I never see issues #1-21, and they seem impossible to find. I know you wrote once that you now felt less proud of those issues but I'm sure there is some quality material within them that cries out to be brought back into print. I am sure a great many readers would welcome reprints of these.

Moving on, I wanted to pass on a little information I have found on those Artima comics that Dr. Kochanek discovered in Brussels. I own one prized copy of Meteor, which features great SF strips by the French Giordan brothers, Raoul and Robert—no US reprints here. According to my BDM or 'Bera Denni Mellot,' the Overstreet of French comics, this monthly ran for 110 issues from May 1953 to June 1962.

I've seen copies of the other three at French conventions and I believe they feature mainly reprints, not from America but other countries in Europe. The BDM explains as follows: Atome Kid: the title strip is by someone called 'Bayo' and may have been Spanish or Italian. Another major series in this title was 'Space Family Robinson,' illustrator unknown but originally published in Britain in the Amalgamated Press weekly Knockout. Atome Kid monthly ran for 35 issues from November 1956 to September 1959.

Cosmos: absorbed Atome Kid when that title folded and continued both of these series. It ran for 62 issues from November 1956 to December 1961. Spoutnik: started by reprinting the first eight issues of Meteor and then ran a variety of SF strips from Spain plus 'Pilote Tempete' by the Dutch artist J.H.Sprenger. It ran for 34 issues from December 1957 to September 1960.

As for the two French versions of DC's Strange Adventures and Mystery In Space, Adventures Fiction ran for 29 issues from March 1958 to September 1960 while Sideral, French for sidereal meaning about the stars, ran for 27 issues from February 1958 to June 1960. Both titles then continued for a time as smaller digest-sized comics. Maybe other readers can shed more light on these Artima science fiction series.

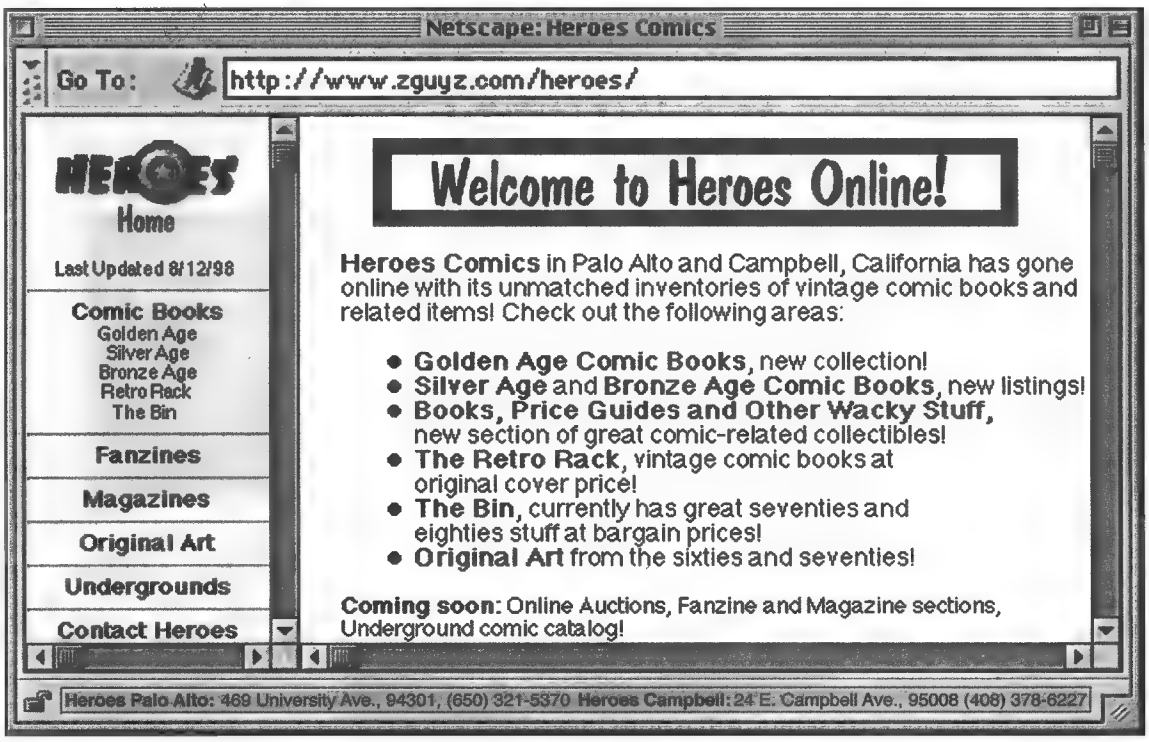
Paul Gravett via E-mail

Rusty Riley

CBM has become the most important document for comic scholars as well as collectors, particularly the profiles and interviews with the giants of the industry. Roger Hill's feature on Reed Crandall in CBM #60 was magnificent! The artist's delicate but dynamic linework reminds me of Frank Godwin, book illustrator and artist on the "Rusty Riley" newspaper strip. When I first saw these particular strips, I thought Reed Crandall might have ghosted them; however, after reading the biographical article I see this is unlikely.

Carl Horak, Alberta, Canada

(Continued on page 68)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Pre-Code Atlas Creatures!

By Pat S. Calhoun

So much has been written about "pre-hero Marvel/Atlas monsters" that it seemed only fair to devote some weird words to classic "pre-Code Atlas creatures." Besides being the output of the same publisher some years apart, the genius of editor/writer Stan Lee presided over both achievements. Although monsters were a monthly mania in the pre-hero books, with Jack Kirby as the chief cover artist, they were only a sporadic part of the horror/fantasy mix in the pre-Code days. But though they appeared less frequently, they were often memorable. Witness the three presented here; not only are they excellent examples of the form, they also offer a gallery of the three top pre-Code Atlas fantasy cover artists: Russ Heath, Bill Everett, and Joe Maneely.

Spellbound #3 (May 1952) is one of the great Atlas books, with a killer "creature" cover by Russ Heath and five stories that are entertaining reads with enjoyable art.

The fun inside starts with "The Thing Behind the Wall," a tale of greed that stretches back to the beginning of World War II and ends with a powerful silent panel. Ogden Whitney's art paces the story perfectly and shines with its own quiet energy—especially in the triumphant finale.

Next up is "The Worm," by Stan Lee and Fred Kida, a crime caper where a rich bully's wife talks his timid brother into murdering him. The huge human-headed worm (shown on the cover) does appear in a dream sequence.

"The Flat Man" is a good entry in the offbeat "two-dimensional dudes" sub-genre. It's got all the depth you'd expect in a quickie about a "2-D" man but still amuses. The art is unsigned, but Hank Chapman is credited as the writer.

"Crazy Glass" is an eerie yarn about a carnival fun-house mirror with outstanding art by Manny Stallman. Lastly, "X" is a superb four-pager drawn by Cal Massey—with a terrific splash panel. The story is a somewhat standard "murder will out" gig, but Massey's art gives it an admirable terseness.

Menace #3 (May 1953) is another winner all the way. The werewolf cover by Bill Everett is sensational, and the insides feature four stories written by Stan Lee. "Men In

Bill Everett's compelling "werewolf" cover on Menace #3 (May 1953) promises supernatural thrills inside, and the four stories deliver them in spades... especially the grim parable "Men In Black."

Russ Heath lays on the chills with his consummate creature-cover (Spellbound #3, May 1952)... a classic that packages five scary stories and some engrossing art.

Black" (catchy title) by Lee and John Romita is an awesome chiller about bigotry and hate crimes and weird retribution.

The scene of horror adorning Astonishing #30 (Feb 1954) is one of the best covers by Joe Maneely.

"Werewolf," engagingly drawn by Everett, has a lot of plot twists that don't lead anywhere special but make for a wild ride.

"Rodeo" benefits from Russ Heath's clean and expressive realism in a story that shows there's still life in the familiar "love triangle leads to murder attempt" plot.

The wrap-up is "You're Gonna Live Forever," by the phenomenal team of Stan Lee and Joe Maneely. A "public enemy" on the lam stumbles into the lab of a chemist who's just invented a cell regeneration serum that promises immortality and the ability to withstand lethal wounds. He shoots the scientist and drinks the serum and decides to hide out in the Louisiana bayou country. There, of course, he meets the grim fate he deserves. Maneely drenches the pages with luminous intensity.

Astonishing #30 (Feb 1954) is another really fine issue, with an "extreme impact" Joe Maneely creature cover, a couple of fantastic stories, and three worthwhile page-turners.

"The Eyes," leads things off, with superior rendering by Pete Tomlinson. This is the story of giant tentacled eyeballs that rise up out of the ocean. They have the power to emit a beam that liquifies human flesh. Their mission is to raid graveyards, to plunder the eyes from fresh corpses, which they take back underwater and grow into giants like them. It's a riot, and the gag ending is only the slightest bit of a cop-out.

There's a sci-fi yarn that's not brilliant but at least has appealing art by Joe Sinnott, then another "unwilling immortality" fable, and a time travel tale about a hen-pecked genius who builds a device that transports him to the future where he finds life equally frustrating.

The last offering, "Until You are Dead," is a good example of that Atlas specialty—the "death row" story. A crook commits murder during a bank robbery, and—knowing it's only a matter of time before he's apprehended—tries to figure out a way to beat the gas chamber. He takes hostage a chemist and his daughter, and—under threat to the girl—the scientist is forced to invent an antidote to the poison gas. But the narrative's climax involves a reversal that makes sure poetic justice is served. It's well done, and Tony di Preta's fast-paced art whirls the reader along and through the whip-crack ending.

These three books also nicely illustrate how Atlas fantasy evolved through its peak years: the vitality of 1952 when Stan Lee's easygoing yet reliable way of working with freelancers built up an impressive stable of artists, prodigious 1953 when the four-color fantasy formulas yielded macabre masterpieces month after month, and the last hurrah of horror that marked early 1954 when publishers got their final fling at outrageousness as the era of censorship approached.

The giant worm, the werewolf, and the flying eyeballs are indeed fit company for such pre-hero delights as Fin Fang Foom and Tim Boo Ba, created during the second wave of creatures, when fantasy comics enjoyed a renaissance in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Pat S. Calhoun has been reading and collecting comic books since the early 1960s. He is the author/co-author of several Overstreet Annual Price Guide feature articles, and his "Weird Words" column in CBM is now in its eighth year. As CBM's associate editor he has proved adept at article selecting, editing, and packaging. Pat lives with his family in Santa Rosa, California.

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By Michelle Nolan

A Timely Experiment in Female Fables

Incredibly, *Girl Comics* portrayed women as valiant... not as victims or vixens!

In the limbo years of 1949-51, before the countless pages of pulp paper that became Atlas but after the Golden Age of Timely, a certain well-known Marvel of a comic book company tried a unique experiment to attract more girls to the newsstands.

The result was an odd, little-known hybrid comic book entitled *Girl Comics*.

Am I one of the few Marvel/Atlas collectors to put together a complete 12-issue set? I wondered after Trina Robbins, the premiere historian of four-color femme fun and fancy, called me recently, having discovered yet another item in her endless list of collecting joys: *Girl Comics*.

Trina's infectious enthusiasm—along with feedback from other fans about three previous Nolan's Notebook columns on the topics of comics for girls, *Venus Comics*, and Timely's late 1940's flirtation with super-powered femmes—inspired me to write about this strange 12-issue curiosity.

If you want a real challenge, just try to put together a set of all dozen issues. It took me more than 10 years, even though they were (and still are) cheap. (And, of course, I'm the world's biggest advocate of cheap comics, being well deserving of one dealer's favorite printable name for me: Princess Penurious!)

The entire run of *Girl Comics* guides for less than $120 in "GD" condition... talk about under-valued!

And there is one incredible gem in the run, from the standpoint of photo cover collectors: *Girl Comics* #3 (April 1950) features an absolutely stunning cover of 17-year-old Elizabeth Taylor, shortly before she was to achieve her first major film role as an adult in *Father of the Bride* (1950) with the inimitable Spencer Tracy. Do you think any 17-year-old girl in the world looks like this today? And to think that parents say their children grow up too fast today! For my money, teenagers look a lot older in comics, magazines and other media of the 1940s than they do today... and Elizabeth Taylor .

The Liz Taylor cover of *Girl Comics* #3 is pictured here as an example of "unseen gold," since it's not revealed in the *Gerber Photo-Journal*, which shows only five of the 12 issues. *Gerber* lists this incredibly beautiful #3 as worthy of a 7 in the book's scarcity index (meaning 20-50 copies exist) while ranking #1 as a 6 and rating the other 10 issues as 5s. I'd say that's pretty close to the mark, although in my opinion #2 and #4 are just as uncommon as #1. Listed at $12.50 in GD in the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*, *Girl Comics* #3 is one of the best bargains in all of comic collecting. (Or at least is was. Sorry! You wouldn't believe the complaints I get from people who say that any of the books covered in *CBM* always go up after they are written about.)

Girl comics
MY HEART LIVED in a "FOOL'S PARADISE!"
52 Pages of TENDER LOVE TALES!
DON'T MISS THIS ISSUE'S STARTLING CONFESSION:
CAN A GIRL BE HAPPY with "BORROWED LOVE?"
Girl comics
a FULL 52 PAGES of TENDER LOVE TALES!
I LOVED A HE-MAN!

The strikingly beautiful 17-year-old Elizabeth Taylor is pictured at the start of her long career in adult film roles on the cover of Girl Comics #3 (Apr 1950).

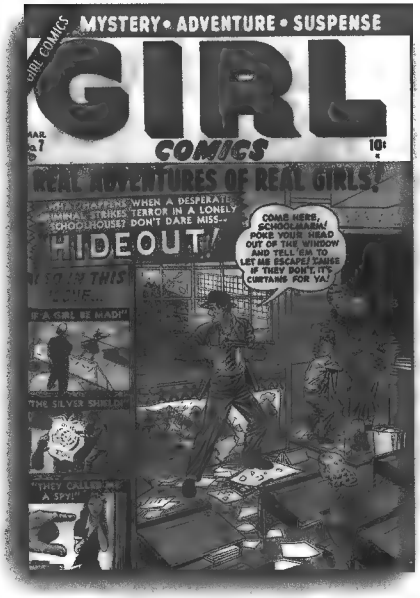
Remember records and sock hops? These subjects on the cover of Girl Comics #4 (Jun 1950) make it the ultimate period piece!

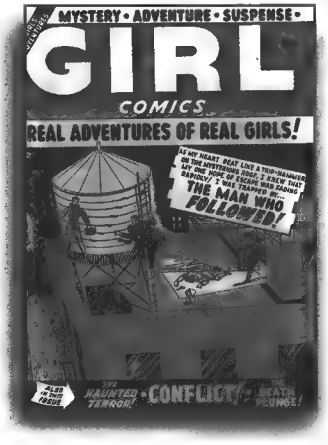
Girl Comics #5 (Oct 1950) is the transition issue, with contents changing from romance to adventure stories with female lead characters.

Girl Comics began as one of more than two dozen romance titles that Marvel publisher Martin Goodman pumped out in response to the phenomenal success of Simon and Kirby's *Young Romance* and *Young Love* under the *Prize Comics* imprint for Crestwood Publications (see last issue of *CBM*).

However, *Girl Comics* lasted only four issues as a typical romance comic. And that's when it began to get interesting.

It also marks one of the few times Marvel tried something fairly original, rather than following the comic book crowd. In the two decades before Marvel struck gold with its 1960's characterizations of Silver Age superheroes, Goodman often would swamp the newsstands with whatever seemed to be selling best at the time.





Then again, for whatever reason, Timely/Marvel had been a leader in producing comics of all types of interest to girls, including a couple of original marketing maneuvers. Remember, for half of 1948 the company had a real anomaly on the stands: four titles featuring costumed heroines! There were *Blonde Phantom, Namora, Sun Girl* and *Venus*, along with characters like Miss America and Golden Girl featured in other Timely publications.

So maybe Marvel was the logical company to try this experiment, after all. At any rate, the truly noteworthy aspect of this was that while the company underwent a serious financial crunch in 1950, cutting almost all of its titles to quarterlies, Marvel comics felt *Girl Comics* was worth saving while trying something new.

It was quite a switch. *Girl Comics* #4 (June 1950) promised "52 pages of Tender Love Tales" and "Stories of Life and Love… as Thrilling as a Moonlight Kiss!" The cover of that issue showed a couple looking over phonograph records.

A few months later, *Girl Comics* #5 (October 1950) featured "Real Adventures of Real Girls!" and "Mystery, Adventure, Suspense," as the blurbs on the cover promised. The little title strip in the upper left-hand corner became "Girls' Adventures," which was what some editor apparently thought the title would be! That little label oddity lasted two issues.

For eight issues, *Girl Comics* was packed with stories featuring female protagonists involved in just that: mystery, adventure and suspense, along with romance. It was like no other title ever published to that point. The title became something of a cross between romance, crime and horror. And even though it lasted only eight issues, those eight issues must have sold reasonably well, since they are generally seen much more often than the first four issues.

The really nifty thing about the change in *Girl Comics*, of course, is that in at least some of the stories girls were shown as capable, adventuresome and ambitious. Romance played a part in most of these tales, of course, and there were still several stories in which girls were more victim or vixen than valiant, apparently so the story could tell a moral lesson.

But, believe it or not, here really was something different. Alas, the change lasted only eight issues, and with #13 (March 1952) the title became *Girl Confessions* and reverted entirely to romance—one of seven romance titles regularly published that year by Marvel (which by this time had become known as Atlas with the familiar globe logo, which lasted until 1957).

But for a little more than a year, *Girl Comics* represented a nifty experiment. Imagine—stories in which girls (actually women, but usually referred to as girls in those days) were treated as capable of the same sort of adventures men had!

It really was a new concept in comics, or at least in comic book titles. The juvenile book world of the post-WWII period, however, was packed with stories of capable young girls!

I've often wondered why there were so few comic book counterparts to the wildly popular juvenile series girls' detective books of the era, including Nancy Drew, the Dana Girls, Judy Bolton, Kay Tracey, Vicki Barr and Cherry Ames, to name a few of the most popular series. Those book sold in millions from the 1930s through the 1960s, perhaps more than any comic books directed at either girls or boys.

However, I have a theory about this: even though millions of girls read comic books in the first three decades of the medium's existence, they probably didn't read as many of them as boys did. Nor did many adults consider it "proper" for girls to read horror, crime or superhero comics, the way boys did. But books—even series books, which were put down by most librarians and seldom available in libraries—now that was a different story!

For girls, there was a certain dignity to be found in a Nancy Drew book—a dignity that wasn't available to the average comic book reader. Millions upon millions of mothers must have thought Nancy Drew was just fine, albeit a "super girl" in her own right. Indeed, by 1950 the Nancy Drew series was 20 years old, and by then many mothers of pre-teen girls had themselves grown up with the most famous of all girl detectives.

(By the way, if you want to search for something even scarcer that first issues of 1930's comic books, try finding true first editions of the first few Nancy Drew books in fine dust jackets. Identification of the Drew series is tricky, similar to the situation involving *Classics Illustrated*. In fact, an entire Nancy Drew guide has been written and published in numerous editions by a most dedicated fellow named David Farah. True firsts

of the early numbers in fine condition would be comparable in value to pricey key Golden Age comics.)

So the likes of Nancy Drew may have been regarded as lowbrow, yet at least marginally respectable and definitely wholesome. But comic books! Now there was something to be avoided for most proper young girls, unless they were of the Little Lulu variety (the comics, not the girls!). Of course, in reality girls by the millions read comic books whenever they could. Nevertheless, far fewer girls than boys were chastised by parents or teachers in 1950 for reading a crime or horror comic at home or in school! (Maybe the girls were just smarter!)

So that's what makes those last eight issues of *Girl Comics* so amazing. It's hard to imagine very many boys picking up the title, even after the switch to suspense, so it was obviously intended for girls. And the girls in the stories were often heroic, indeed, even though some of the stories were bizarre even by Marvel/Timely standards.

There were spy stories, circus stories, airplane stories, doctor stories… you name it, editor Stan Lee and Co. came up with it! Thirty two such stories over the eight issues.

Girl Comics #6 (January 1951) contains a story entitled "The Horns of Horror" on the cover (and just "The Horns" inside). It's the truly strange tale of a girl whose father was accused of cowardice in the bull ring after he turned blind because of a genetic defect. She experiences the same genetic dilemma, but when she in turn goes blind in the ring, she manages to redeem both of their names by killing her last bull.

The story doesn't make a lot of sense, but presenting the concept of female bravery and honor makes a lot of sense. In the same issue, a tale entitled "The Victim was Me!", the female victim demonstrates so much bravery she saves her own life in addition to getting help from the hero. Bravo! It wasn't often during this period that girls were shown in such a courageous, determined light.

Likewise, in *Girl Comics* #7 (March 1951), there were the inspirational stories of a female teacher and a policewoman who prove their mettle against insane criminals. In that same issue there was a clever psychological mystery entitled "If a Girl Be Mad" (sounds like something out of a 1960's or 1970's Marvel, doesn't it?), along with the strange story of a female traitor, "They Called Me a Spy."

In that strange spy story, so redolent of the "Red Scare" of the period, the girl stands in her prison cell in the last panel, bathed in a beam of sunlight and making the following declaration: "No matter what made me do it… I realize now how terribly wrong I was! Bit by bit, I was selling away the freedom of America… a freedom unequal in any other country in the world! I was sentenced to five years for conspiracy to commit espionage… imprisonment is teaching me the true value of freedom!"

They just don't write them that way any more!

Speaking of that, one of the romance stories in *Girl Comics* #2 (January 1950) is entitled "Blind Date!" And yes, it is really about how a girl falls in love with a blind man! Can you imagine a story with this title in today's politically correct climate? Holy Moley! At the end of the story, the man's blindness is cured, of course.

One of the stories in *Girl Comics* #8 (May 1951), drawn by Ann Brewster, has a cliché title, "Wings of Death," but it's a nifty little yarn about how a girl and her brother save their little airplane business from criminals. In the same issue, a story entitled "The Lonely One" shows how a girl learns the value of friendship in inspirational fashion.

Atlas/Marvel definitely had a sense that it was on to something unusual. The blurb on the cover of #9 (July 1951) reads "Only *Girl Comics* Can Give You Stories Like These." Indeed!

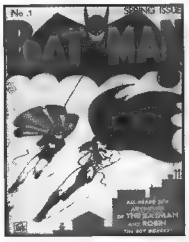
In *Girl Comics* #10 (September 1951), a railroad engineer's daughter bravely helps her dead father finish 40 years of unbroken trips even after he dies at the controls of the train! This one has to be read to be believed, so unbelievably bold and daring are the girl's feats. But the point is, the girl is the hero, not her boyfriend. This was truly unusual in comics during this period!

The last two issues of *Girl Comics* returned to a bit more stress on the romance angle, foreshadowing the change to a straight romance comic. Unfortunately, the concept of girls as capable heroines apparently wasn't selling as well as the many romance comics of the period.

In retrospect, it's a shame… but it's rewarding to remember that for a brief time in comic book history girls really were women—in *Girl Comics*!

FACING PAGE, BOTTOM: **In Girl Comics #7 (Mar 1951), a woman in a traditional role—a school teacher—outwits a criminal in the tale "Hideout!"**

Michelle Nolan is a nationally recognized collector and researcher of comic books from the '40s through the '60s. In real life, Michelle works as a freelance journalist.



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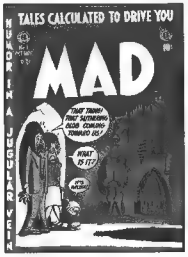

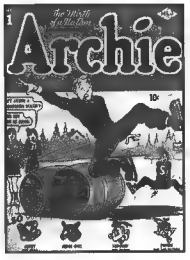

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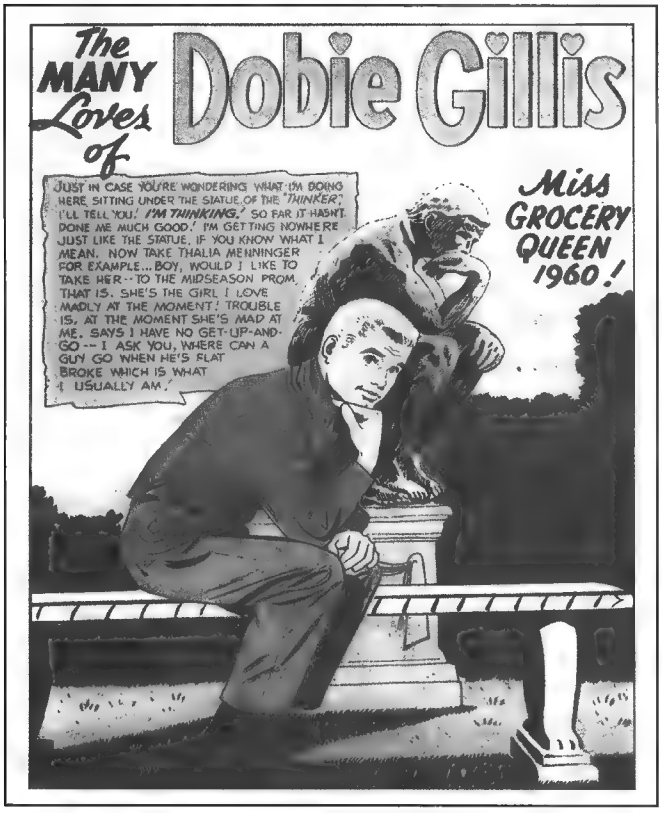
THE MANY LIVES & LOVES OF DC'S Dobie G

WHILE IT TOOK A FEW YEARS FOR SILVER AGE HEROES such as the Flash, Green Lantern, Adam Strange and the rest to catch on, DC saw the writing on the wall early on because they began purging their line of humor comics to clear space on the spin-racks for the adventure titles in the works.

Beginning in 1957, DC canceled humor comics left and right, dumping long-running funny animal titles like *The Dodo and the Frog, Nutsy Squirrel* and *Raccoon Kids,* and even the venerable *Mutt & Jeff.* DC's teen humor comics took an especially hard hit, and their "big three" (*Buzzy, A Date With Judy and Leave It To Binky*) were all dropped by 1960. In a way, that wasn't such a bad thing, since when it came to teenage humor, DC usually only got the "teenage" part right. *Buzzy and Binky* were both highly forgettable Archie wannabes, while *A Date With Judy*—marginally funny at best—was based on an old radio and TV show that hadn't aired since 1953.


The MANY Loves of Dobie Gillis
JUST IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT I'M DOING HERE SITTING UNDER THE STATUE OF THE "THINKER", I'LL TELL YOU.' I'M THINKING.' SO FAR IT HASN'T DONE ME MUCH GOOD.' I'M GETTING NOWHERE JUST LIKE THE STATUE. IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN. NOW TAKE THALIA MENNINGER FOR EXAMPLE... BOY, WOULD I LIKE TO TAKE HER -- TO THE MIDSEASON PROM. THAT IS. SHE'S THE GIRL I LOVE MADLY AT THE MOMENT. TROUBLE IS, AT THE MOMENT SHE'S MAD AT ME. SAYS I HAVE NO GET-UP-AND-GO -- I ASK YOU, WHERE CAN A GUY GO WHEN HE'S FLAT BROKE WHICH IS WHAT I USUALLY AM.
Miss GROCERY QUEEN 1960!

Classic splash panel from Many Loves of Dobie Gillis #1 (May/Jun 1960).

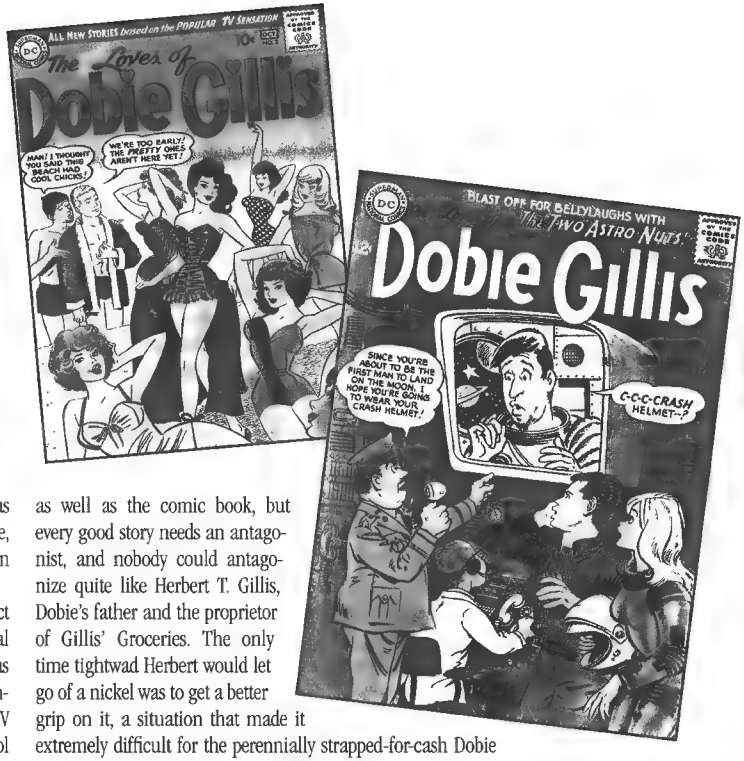
DC was understandably preoccupied with their resurgent line of superhero comics in 1960 (both *Justice League Of America* and *Green Lantern* debuted that year), so even some of their great humor comics, such as *Sgt. Bilko,* went down for the count. That left just a handful of licensed properties—*Jerry Lewis, Bob Hope* and *Fox & Crow*—plus *Sugar & Spike* and the annual *Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer* comic to satisfy DC's humor fans for the next half-dozen years... except for one more title.

To their credit, and to the delight of many fans, DC ultimately decided not to abandon the teen humor genre entirely, as the company launched in the Spring of 1960 what became their best teen humor title ever: *The Many Loves Of Dobie Gillis,* inspired by the CBS TV show of the same name. *Dobie Gillis* debuted in May/June, 1960, replacing *Sgt. Bilko* on DC's publishing schedule (ironically, *The Phil Silvers Show* was dropped from the CBS prime time schedule in September 1959, the same month *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* debuted on the same network).

While *Sgt. Bilko* fans had to be disappointed to see their hero's comic canceled (a double whammy, actually, since the title had been so popular that it spawned a spin-off, *Sgt. Bilko's Pvt. Doberman*), Bilko's loss was Dobie's gain, since Bob Oksner, the dean of DC's humor comics, shifted effortlessly from one TV comic to another. Dobie Gillis was edited by (and some say written by) Lawrence Nadle, although Nadle's actual role has been called into question over the years. According to long-time humor scribe Arnold Drake, Nadle had his artists write their own stories but didn't pay them for their work, which resulted in something of a bookkeeping nightmare for DC after Nadle passed away (refer to Lou Mougin's interview with Drake, which appeared in *Comics Interview* # 16). Since Oksner had shown a facility for writing with his Miss Cairo Jones comic strip, it is cer-

By Dave Blanchard

illis!


ALL NEW STORIES based on the POPULAR TV SENSATION
The Loves of Dobie Gillis
MAN! I THOUGHT YOU SAID THIS BEACH HAD COOL CHICKS!
WE'RE TOO EARLY! THE PRETTY ONES AREN'T HERE YET!
BLAST OFF FOR BELLYLAUGHS WITH The Two Astro-Nuts!
Dobie Gillis
SINCE YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE THE FIRST MAN TO LAND ON THE MOON, I HOPE YOU'RE GOING TO WEAR YOUR CRASH HELMET!
C-C-C-CRASH HELMET--?

Bob Oksner beauties adorn the cover of Dobie Gillis #3 (Sep/Oct 1960) and Maynard blasts for bellylaughs with new editor Murray Boltinoff in Dobie #25 (Sep 1964).

tainly credible that he could have also written Dobie, as well as the other humor comics he drew for Nadle. Whatever the case, *Dobie Gillis* quickly became one of the best humor comics on the stands, and in its day a worthy rival to Archie.

Simply by virtue of having Oksner involved (Oksner in fact was named Best Comic Book Cartoonist by the National Cartoonists Society during his *Dobie* run), *Dobie Gillis* was destined to be an excellent comic, but it had an extra advantage, of course: It was based on a popular, youth-oriented TV show with wonderfully well-defined characters. High school students Dobie Gillis and Maynard G. Krebs were the principal players, Dobie being on the constant lookout for "a girl to call his own," as the TV theme song went, while beatnik Maynard pretty much stuck to his love for jazz and hanging out with his "good buddy" Dobie. Dobie would go to great lengths to attract the attention of the latest fair damsel who had caught his eye, while scatter-brained Maynard would go to even greater lengths to drive Dobie crazy with his "helpful" suggestions.

Dobie and Maynard were the heart and soul of the TV show as well as the comic book, but every good story needs an antagonist, and nobody could antagonize quite like Herbert T. Gillis, Dobie's father and the proprietor of Gillis' Groceries. The only time tightwad Herbert would let go of a nickel was to get a better grip on it, a situation that made it extremely difficult for the perennially strapped-for-cash Dobie to take any of his girlfriends out on dates. Rounding out the comic book's main characters was Winifred Gillis, Herbert's long suffering wife and Dobie's mother, who had more common sense than Dobie, Maynard and Herbert put together.

At first, the comic book patterned itself visually and thematically after the TV show, with Dobie posed in front of Rodin's Thinker statue on the splash page of *Dobie Gillis* #1 (May/June 1960), talking directly to the reader:

"Just in case you're wondering what I'm doing here sitting

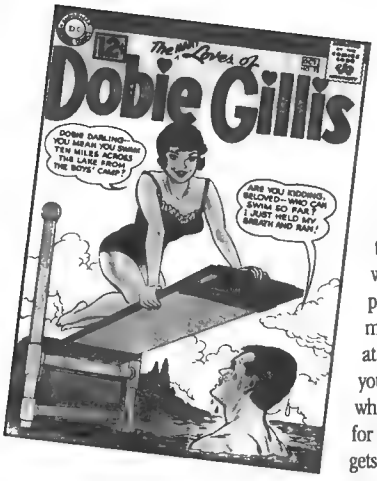
RECYCLED GLORY: Showcasing Windy & Willy

DC's *Showcase*, the birthplace of the Silver Age, has been well celebrated for its legendary character revivals. The Golden Age Flash, Green Lantern and Atom were all updated and successfully revamped as brand-new characters for a whole new generation of kids in the late 1950s and early 1960s. What is not nearly as well-known—and for good reason—is that DC also used *Showcase* to revive some of their teenage humor stars, including a well-known pair the company no longer even had the licensing rights to publish under their original name.

By the late 1960s, the Silver Age of superheroes was coming to an end, leaving the door wide open for the much-ignored genre of teen humor to experience an astonishing comeback. Archie Publications' *Archie* became one of the best-selling comic books on the stands, buoyed by the success of a Saturday morning cartoon and a Number One hit song ("Sugar Sugar"). With monthly sales of *Archie* reportedly at or near the magical million mark, the other comics publishers quickly jumped on the bandwagon.

DC, unfortunately, didn't exactly have a bottomless well of fondly remembered teen humor stars to draw from. Consider that DC's longest-running teenage *(Continued on page 30)*

THE MANY LOVES OF DOBIE GILLIS TELEVISION SHOW © CBS. THE MANY LOVES OF DOBIE GILLIS COMIC BOOK © 1998 DC


The Many Loves of
Dobie Gillis
DOBIE DARLING— YOU MEAN YOU SWAM TEN MILES ACROSS THE LAKE FROM THE BOYS' CAMP?
ARE YOU KIDDING, BELOVED— WHO CAN SWIM SO FAR? I JUST HELD MY BREATH AND RAN!

Aquaman wasn't the only super-swimmer with his own comic book in 1962... check out the cover of Dobie Gillis #15 (Sep/Oct 1962).

Dobie Gillis!

under the statue of the 'Thinker,' I'll tell you! I'm thinking! So far it hasn't done me much good! I'm getting nowhere just like the statue, if you know what I mean. Now take Thalia Menninger for example... boy, would I like to take her—to the midseason prom, that is. She's the girl I love madly at the moment! Trouble is, at the moment she's mad at me. Says I have no get-up-and-go—I ask you, where can a guy go when he's flat broke which is what I usually am!" Needing money for the prom, Dobie asks his dad for a loan, but gets an earful from Herbert: "Until you decide to come in once in a while, not to help me, mind you, just to say a little hello, or even a hi, Dad, without any ulterior motive...." Striking out at the grocery store, Dobie falls prey to Thalia's latest money-making plan. Thalia was jaw-droppingly beautiful, but a greedy and grasping schemer. As much as she loved Dobie, she loved money more, so her schemes typically centered on improving Dobie's financial health.

In *Dobie Gillis* #1, Thalia's idea is for Gillis' Groceries to sponsor a "Miss Grocery Queen" beauty pageant... without Herbert's consent, of course. Thalia's bathing suit-clad parade through the streets of Central City in a car promoting the contest inevitably results in Herbert's being cited with a $100 fine for violating numerous city ordinances. Add in a few non sequiturs and "Oolie-oo-poo-pah" jazz riffs from Maynard, and all in all, the debut issue of *Dobie Gillis* gave fans of the TV show a competently written story, a few cheesecake shots of Thalia, and even a four-page backup story starring "Dobie's Pal Buddy Maynard," who didn't really have much to do in the lead story.

The next few issues of the comic book also stayed pretty close to the TV show, at least in terms of featuring Thalia Menninger as the love of Dobie's life. The problem was, Thalia was pretty much a one-note song. On the weekly TV show she was merely an occasional guest-star; for the bi-monthly comic book to achieve long-term success (which it ultimately did, lasting even longer than the program), it had to redefine the essential elements of the TV show into comic book terms.

What that meant, first of all, was that Oksner was encouraged to draw beautiful young women as often as possible. Thalia was dropped from the storylines in favor of a long string of equally nubile (though generally far less memorable) nymphs.

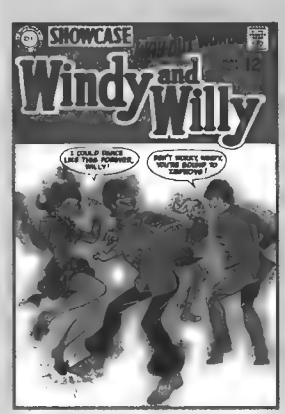
Equally important to *Dobie Gillis*'s success as a comic book was playing up Maynard as a co-star, rather than just a comic relief sidekick. DC made sure that Maynard's bearded mug appeared on the front cover of practically every issue, since the TV Maynard had all but eclipsed Dobie in popularity, thanks to the quirky uniqueness of the character. Curiously, the comic book Maynard never indulged in the frequent Maynardisms made so popular on the TV show, such as "You rang?" and "Work?!?" and "You're like a real human being." The words "like" and "man," though, were quite effectively beaten to death, especially on the covers.

Windy & Willy

Continued from page 29

humor title had been *Buzzy*, which last appeared in 1958, and you'll get an idea of the company's proficiency in the genre.

The fact of the matter is, Archie Publications had pretty much cornered the market on teen humor titles, but DC gave it the ol' college (or should that be high school?) try, anyway. They'd already tested the waters in 1966 with *Swing With Scooter*, a rather tepid attempt to cash in on the "British invasion" era of popular music. A group of teenagers at Benedict Arnold High, led by Super-Hip, took over the spotlight in *Bob Hope*. DC had even tried *Teen Beat/Teen Beam*, a comic book-sized teenage idol magazine along the lines of *Tiger Beat*. None of these really fit the Archie mold, though. Then DC remembered their *Showcase* formula-for-success: Take an idea that worked in the past, update it and repackage it, and try it again. So that's exactly what DC did with their second-longest-running teen humor title, *Leave It To Binky*. DC reprinted some old stories, gave it a new cover (with bathing beauties, natch) that made it look like Binky might be just as funny as *Archie*, and published it as *Showcase* #70 (Sep/Oct 1967). The strategy worked, and Leave It To Binky was revived in 1968, and in fact even produced a spin-off a year later called *Binky's Buddies*.



DC was clearly on to something, so they went to the well again and exhumed a teen humor title of undeniable quality, both writing and art-wise: *Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*. Editor Dick Giordano decided to reprint *Dobie* #26, the last issue, which in many ways was the most atypical of all the issues, and for that very reason made it the best choice. It was a mad-cap adventure featuring a love-starved hag and a host of magical spells wrought upon a hapless Maynard. You didn't have to know a thing about the old "Dobie Gillis" TV show to be able to appreciate the wacky humor in the stor which made it all the more appea ing since the TV show hadn't aired primetime for the past six years.

There was just one teensy little problem: DC's license with 20th Century Fox, which produced th TV show, had run out long ago. Undeterred by this minor technic ty, and in the pure recycling spirit *Showcase*, DC had Bob Oksner redraw Dobie and Maynard's faces—turning Dobie's brown hai to black, giving Maynard granny glasses, lengthening their hair do to their shoulders, outfitting them "mod" clothing—and gave them new names. Dobie became Willy Newton and Maynard became Windy Wiggs, and *Showcase* #81 (March 1969) was headlined *Wi & Willy* (with Maynard finally get top-billing!). Without even waitin for sales reports, DC promptly

ALL NEW STORIES Starring the POPULAR TV SENSATION!
The MANY Loves of
Dobie Gillis
12¢
MAYNARD--HOW CAN YOU DO THIS TO ME--HE'S MY HIGHEST RIVAL!
LIKE YEAH--AND HE'S ALSO THE RICHEST!
VOTE FOR CHATSWORTH
DARLING, I ONLY HAVE EYES FOR YOU--TO BE WITH YOU--I'D WALK A MILLION--AND POLKA DOTS...
THAT'S TRUE-BLUE DOBIE--THE ONE-WITH-MAN!

Dobie's arch-rival, Chatsworth Osborne Jr., makes a rare app. in #14 (Jul/Aug 1962).

In the final analysis, what really made *Dobie Gillis* a successful comic was that, early on, Nadle and Oksner decided to develop the series on its own terms, more or less independent of the TV show. That meant, for instance, disregarding Dobie and Maynard's induction into the army and subsequent enrolling in college, opting instead to keep them forever locked in as high school students, à la the Riverdale gang.

This strategy ultimately paid off, as fans of the TV show found a looser, more free-spirited approach to the characters in the comic book. True, the TV show was far wittier and had an occasional poignancy rarely if ever found in comic books. But *Dobie Gillis* never pretended to match the range of acting talents found on the TV show; instead, it carved out its own four-color niche by involving the readers in fast-paced, rollicking slapstick, made all the more palatable by a bevy of beauties. In other words, DC took what worked for their *Bob Hope* and *Jerry Lewis* comics, and applied that storytelling formula to *Dobie Gillis*.

For instance, *Dobie Gillis* #6 (March/April 1961) featured three extended dream sequences, set in various eras—prehistoric times, 17th century colonial America and the days of Ali Baba—that would've bankrupted the TV show. Oksner pulled out all the visual stops for this issue—Maynard appears as a talking sabre-toothed tiger and a genie, while Dobie rides magic carpets and gets locked up in the stocks. Where the TV show emphasized witty wordplay, the comic had an unlimited special effects budget. In *Dobie Gillis* #16 (November/December 1962), a wacky scientist (are there any other kind in comic books?) programs his electronic brain to identify two typical teenagers—Dobie and Maynard, of course. The scientist gives Dobie $100 to spend (as part of a market research project), and Maynard's job is to keep track of how Dobie spends the dough. Dobie meets a beautiful rich girl (are there any other kind in comic books?), and tries to win her over with limousine rides and the red carpet treatment, but she's tired of all the rich boys she's been dating and longs for a pauper instead. When Dobie tries to explain that he's really poor after all, she dumps him anyway: "Sorry, Dobie! If there's anything I can't stand more than a rich playboy—it's a poor stupid boy!"

Nadle's tenure as editor of *Dobie Gillis* lasted four delightful years. His untimely death, however, led to a temporary suspension of the title after issue #24 (March/April 1964). Even though the TV show had left the air in the fall of 1963, DC decided to keep the comic book going, and Murray Boltinoff was brought in as the new editor. Boltinoff chose the aforementioned Arnold Drake as his writer, a man equally adept at humor comics (*Jerry Lewis*) as he was offbeat superheroes (*Doom Patrol*), and wisely retained Bob Oksner as artist.

The final two issues of *Dobie Gillis* mark a dramatic shift from the previous 24 stories, with #25 (September 1964) finding Dobie and Maynard blasted into orbit in a space capsule, and issue #26 (October 1964) involving a love-crazed witch who turns Maynard into various talking animals. Oksner was obviously inspired by Drake's over-the-top storylines, and turned out some of his best work ever on these two issues. Foreign spies and shady gamblers and, of course, a bevy of beauties cavorted through these rambling adventures. Herbert and Winifred and the rest of the Central City gang were never seen or heard from again.

Sadly, just when *Dobie Gillis* had reached its absolute peak as a comic book, DC decided to cancel it. Probably declining sales and a reluctance to renew the license on a canceled TV show were the reasons the comic book came to an end.

And so *Dobie Gillis*, the best teenage humor title DC has ever produced, came to an end after 26 issues. However, that's by no means the end of the story as you'll note in the accompanying sidebar detailing *Windy & Willy*!

In Dobie Gillis #21 (Sep/Oct 1963) Dobie sees spots... or is it dots?... before his eyes.

launched *Windy & Willy* in its own title, debuting in May/June 1969. However, DC had pretty much shot their recyclable wad with the *Showcase* issue; to continue the series, they would have to go back to the less fanciful issues, which featured Dobie's supporting cast more prominently, especially his parents. In the *Windy & Willy* version, Herbert and Winifred curiously retained their first names, though poor Herbert had gone bald in the transition and Winifred had colored her hair.

Since the original stories were impeccable examples of solid storytelling, the *Windy & Willy* issues still retain some of the *Dobie Gillis* charm. However, the simple reality of the situation was that most kids in the late 1960s preferred to read about Archie Andrews and the rest of the Riverdale gang. DC had better luck trying to imitate *Archie* with lackluster knockoffs like *Binky* and *Date With Debbi*, chock-full of short stories and gag pages, than they did recycling full-length stories written half a decade earlier. Though DC tried their best to hide just how old those *Windy & Willy* stories were, all the cosmetically-added love beads and bell-bottoms and mini-skirts didn't really accomplish much since the stories themselves still had that early 1960s feel to them. So *Windy & Willy* was canceled after issue #4 (November/December 1969).

Still and all, considering that DC gave *Windy & Willy* absolutely no promotional push at all, the overall strength of the original stories combined with an extremely favorable environment for launching (or relaunching) a teen humor title gave Dobie Gillis one more year of glory on the spin-racks.

Dave Blanchard edits and writes for a number of computer industry publications, but he has a lot more fun writing about Silver Age comics. He lives in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. *Thanks to Lou Mougin and especially Craig Shutt for their assistance.*

Buying The Edgar Church Collection!

Part II

If you heard a rumor that I'm trying to reunite the late Edgar Church's amazing collection of comics, it's no rumor! After 25 years in the industry, it's become more clear to me than ever that the "Mile High" collection is not only the best-kept collection of key issues in our business, it's probably the best pop culture collection of any kind that anyone is ever likely to find. Church's collection not only represents a standard for comic book collectors, but a benchmark against which all types of pop culture collectibles can be evaluated.

The comics listed on the next three pages are not the only portions of this collection I'm interested in. If you have a single Mile High book or an entire run (and as long as they are in unrestored original condition), please don't hesitate to send me your sale list. If you have any books from this collection, particularly those in NM to NM+, I am prepared to pay you *at least* 2x Guide in instant cash, regardless of publisher.

As I mentioned in my introductory note in **Comic Book Marketplace #61**, many comics from this collection reside with collectors who rightly treasure them and would never think of parting with them under normal circumstances. If you are one of those collectors, please remember that this is not a one-time offer; it is an ongoing process. Should circumstances change, please remember this offer. **CBM #63** will contain the next update of this list.

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Sincerely,

Steve Geppi
Chief Executive Officer

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P.S. If you missed our first list in **CBM #61**, it's on the next page. The new additions begin on Page 34!

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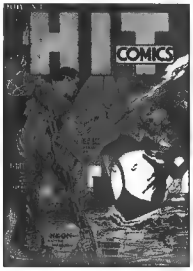

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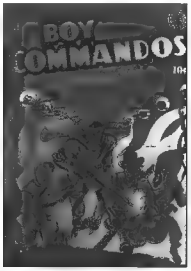

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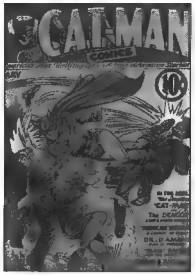

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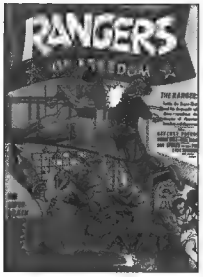

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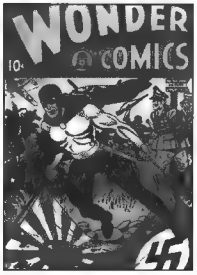

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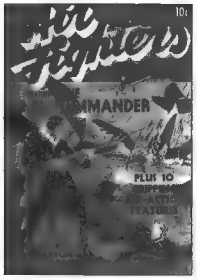

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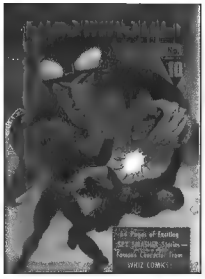

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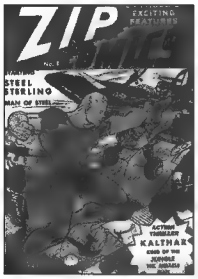

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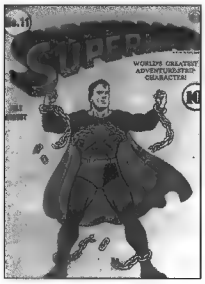

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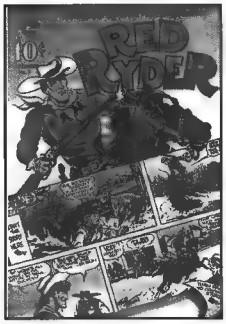
The Edgar Church Collection Buy List #2



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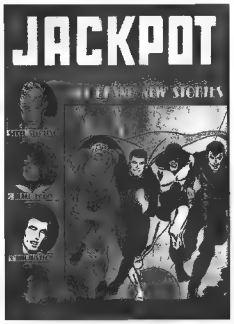

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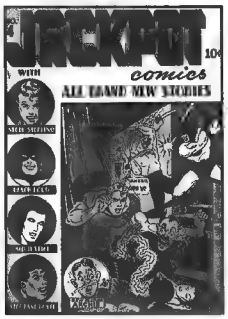

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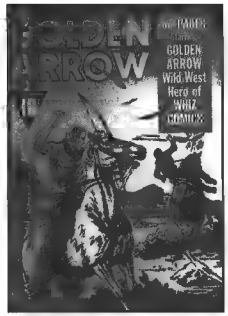

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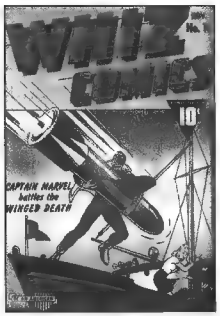

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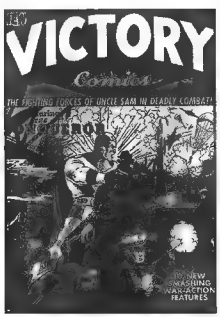

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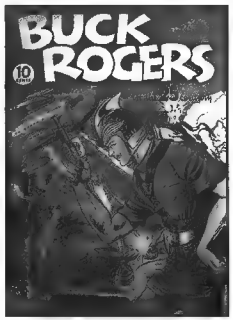

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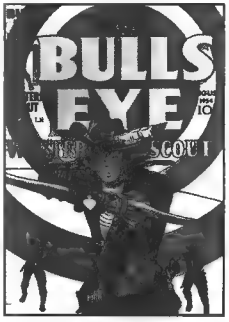

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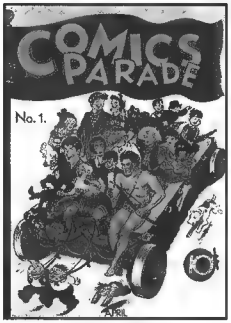

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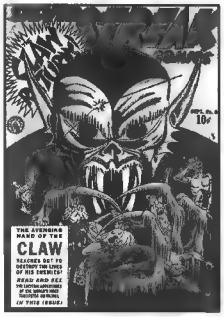

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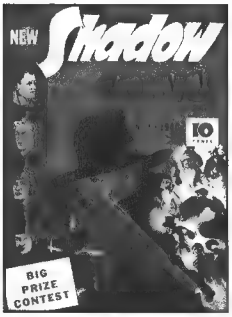

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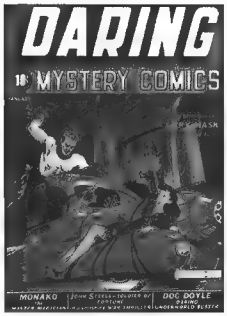

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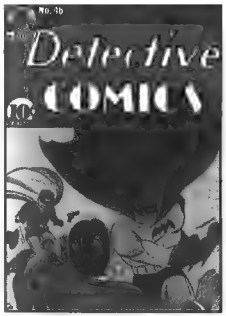

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BARKS DISCOVERY

The Mystery of the Lost Ducks!

As told to Michael Naiman

After lying in obscurity for forty-five years, three full-color, pen and ink drawings of the Disney ducks have recently been discovered. Two of them constitute the earliest surviving examples of Uncle Scrooge cover art. More remarkable, however, is the fact that all three drawings are by the Old Duck Man... Carl Barks. Given to three children who were Barks' neighbors at the time, these drawings were probably traced from rough sketches for covers that were published in 1953... *Four Color* #495 (*Uncle Scrooge* #3, Sept. 1953) *Uncle Scrooge* #4 (Dec./Feb. 1953-54) and *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* #158 (Nov. 1953).

Barks produced these little curiosities while living on the ranch of Don and Nancy Robinson, who owned ten acres of orange trees in Hemet, California. Barks, in his early fifties, was living in a rented cottage about two city blocks from the Robinson's main house.

A whirlwind of controversy immediately surrounded the discovery of the drawings. Well-meaning friends faxed copies to Barks, who at first disavowed having done them. Meanwhile, Gladstone publisher Bruce Hamilton traveled to Florida to inspect one of the pictures, the treasure chest scene from *Uncle Scrooge* #3 (*Four Color* #495). Satisfied that it was authentic, Bruce undertook the delicate task of explaining his reasoning to Barks. With the facts illuminated and some long forgotten details clarified, the Duck Man now acknowledges the drawings as his.

Barks' first reaction was that the inking on the Robinson drawings was below his professional standards. That is certainly true if they are compared with the published covers, however these drawings were never intended for publication. Instead, they are the size of the concept sketches he submitted to his editors, who would pick and choose and return drawings with suggestions for revisions. Finished covers would be in a larger format, and Western would not return them. The only art to remain in Barks' possession, besides panels he himself had cut out from his stories, would be these cover concepts. It would be a simple matter to take three such sketches, put them on a light board, place paper over them, and ink them. So the Robinson drawings were likely traced from roughs.

This explains the difference between the drawings and their published counterparts. For instance, Barks altered Scrooge's pose and expression when making his final version of the treasure chest scene. In addition, the menacing dagger was removed from the pirate's mouth. Disney editors would have "suggested" this modification in keeping with their non-violence policy. Variations in the drawing for *Uncle Scrooge* #4, with Donald sewing patches on Scrooge's coat, are more subtle in nature. Conspicuously missing are Barks' trademark "eye-darts." The third composition, with Donald and Daisy are virtually identical to those on Western's cover, but the three nephews and their Halloween pumpkin are missing.

A second mysterious aspect about the drawings were the inscriptions. The lettering at the bottom of each—"Carl Barks: Walt Disney Comics"—is in Barks' familiar style and matches his ownership signature on file copies of his comic books. But the carefully penned script is not by any of the likely candidates: not Don Robinson, his wife, nor Barks himself. For a while, Barks thought it might have been the hand of Garé (pronounced "Garay") Carroll, soon to be his wife (they were dating at the time and were married in 1954), but writing samples from Garé's letters rule out that possibility. The last logical candidate would be the children's grandmother, the late Laura Waggoner. Mrs. Waggoner visited the Robinson household almost every weekend in 1953, and it is known that she often misspelled Timmy's name as "Timmie," which is the way the treasure chest drawing is inscribed. Mrs. Robinson is currently searching for examples of her mother's handwriting, and it is likely that this handwriting conundrum will be solved in the near future.

Still a "big mystery" (and the most significant unanswered piece of the puzzle) is the question of the color work done on the drawings. Don Robinson, an former architect had the skill, but denies he did it. He had disposed of his art tools and paints before moving to Hemet. Nancy, his wife, contends that she certainly didn't do the coloring. But, whoever did it, did so very soon after the completion of the drawings. Both husband and wife recall Mr. Robinson took the finished drawings almost immediately to a framer in Riverside. Barks maintains he had no hand in the coloring, saying he didn't do color work in those days. His position is strengthened by the brown shading on Scrooge's coat. It is unlikely he would have chosen this color over the familiar red used in the pages of Western's comics.

So who did it? The only other capable person around would have been Garé Carroll, who had studied painting since her youth. Around this time, she had also just started to ink the background art in the duck comics. She might have easily been

A similar article by Bruce Hamilton appears in Uncle Scrooge *#312 (August 1998).*

Differences between the concept art and Barks' final published cover for **Four Color #495** (Uncle Scrooge #3) are noteworthy as an example of the thinking processes at work; note the change in attitudes, positioning and props.

No nephew or Trick or Treat surprise for Donald in this rendition of the cover of Walt Disney's Comics & Stories #158.

less familiar with the color of Scrooge's coat. But since Garé passed away in 1993, the mystery is not likely to be resolved.

The Robinson kids are not too concerned—Greg, Sarah and Timmy's wife Rhanda are hanging on to the drawings. Whereas the pictures merely recalled fond bucolic memories a few months ago, they are now taking on the status of heritage... a heritage now linked to the masterful skills of one of comicdom's most revered creators and gentlemen... Carl Barks.

Joe

Interviewed by Will Murray

Simon was in his heyday as a creator and as a publisher long before I was buying comics from the local newsstand. I was born in 1953, about the time that Joe and Jack Kirby were getting ready to create *Fighting American*. That made me ten years old in 1963, when I was in my comics collecting glory. Joe had virtually moved out of comics to edit *Sick* magazine by that time. Still, even in his absence, he touched my young sensibilities. I was a huge fan of Lee and Kirby's Captain America, never dreaming it had originally been Simon and Kirby's Captain America. My first brush with the pure magic of Simon & Kirby was when I scored a coverless copy of *Fighting American* #3 from my local barber. It was rough and tumble, yet a full of a kind of brutal, whimsical fun not found in post-Code books. I wanted more, naturally.

It was like an answer to a prayer when Harvey released the big annual-sized *Fighting American* #1 in 1966. Unfortunately, there were no further issues. But an unpublished *Fighting*

Can you name all these characters?

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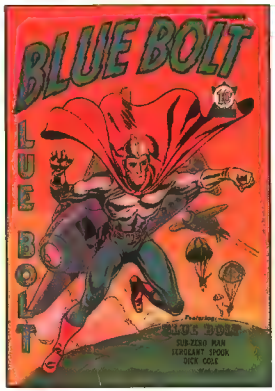
Simon and Kirby's first collaboration, **Blue Bolt** (#7, Dec 1940) and **Blast Off** #1 (Oct 1965).



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Look back with Humor!

SIMON

American cover did show up on a 1966 issue of *Sick*, depicting the famous scene where Nelson Flagg's consciousness is transferred into the body of *Fighting American*. Huckleberry Fink stood in for Nelson Flagg as Fighting American asked: "You're going to transfer my mind in that body?"

I never suspected Joe's hand behind the short-lived Harvey superhero line of the mid-60s, or that he created Radio Comic's The Fly, or that he had a hand in DC's *Challengers of the Unknown*. For that matter, I never dreamed that in the unimaginably distant future beyond 1966, we would become friends.

About ten years ago, I sought an interview with Joe and Jack in anticipation of the impending hardcover release of Marvel's *Fighting American*. That first phone contact with Joe turned into an

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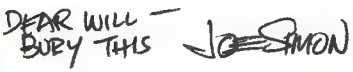
JOE SIMON

ongoing friendship and I was later privileged to visit Joe several times in his Manhattan studio apartment, its walls covered with unpublished artwork. I have many fond memories of my visits with Joe. Like the time I handed him a copy of *Brother Power, the Geek* #1 and he returned it autographed thusly:



That self-deprecating humor of his—rare in a field of gargantuan, self-important egos—is what I enjoy most, and most respect, about Joe Simon.

But the memory that stands out in my mind was when I was helping Joe with his autobiographical book, *The Comic Book Makers*. As we talked, Joe did something I thought would have been impossible. He was preparing to reprint some artwork from *Boy's Ranch* and remarked that: "These colors are really terrible." So, laying a tearsheet torn from a vintage issue of *Boy's Ranch* on his scarred drawing table, Joe dug out his Dr. Marten's Dyes and began recoloring the printed page! A dull gray horse became purple. A buckskin jacket, yellow. And so on.

A year or so later, when the page—it was the Pony Express Rider pinup—appeared, it was just as Joe had artfully recolored it that day.

That is Joe Simon. A wizard of comics. Writer, editor, artist, inker—for all I know he letters, too.

What follows are extracts from interviews I've done with Joe over the years:

© 1998 DC

Simon's Brother Power, The Geek #1 (Sep/Oct 1968) features the "Dangers in Hippie-Land!"

Father and Son team Joe Simon and Jim Simon's new creation... Shieldmaster.

© 1998 JOE SIMON & JIM SIMON

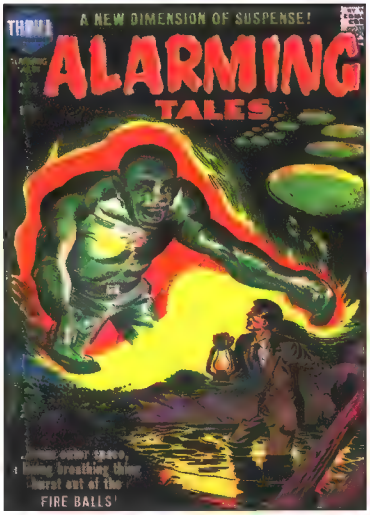
Will Murray: *How did you fall into the early comic book business?*

Joe Simon: I was a newspaperman. I worked for Hearst, and Hearst was closing his papers. Every time I'd transfer to another Hearst paper, he'd close it up. He was going broke at the time. They folded his second newspaper under me and I just came to New York and was doing illustration for

© HEADLINE PUB.

The cover of Justice Traps The Guilty #56 (Nov 1953) pictured Simon's staff in a police line-up. L TO R: Oda, Simon, Genalo, Meskin, and Kirby.

SA classic—Alarming Tales #2 (Nov 1957) and GA gem—Red Raven #1 (Aug 1940).



© HARVEY FEATURES SYNDICATE
© 1998 MEG

MacFadden…for a guy named Harlan Crandall, who was the art director. Crandall was a friend of Lloyd Jacquet, at Funnies, Incorporated. He sent me over there.

Murray: *It wasn't long before you met Jack Kirby and the two of you were creating books for Timely. Your first big project there was* Red Raven*…which is now a very rare and expensive book to collect. But it only lasted one issue… why?*

Simon: *Red Raven* was one of the worst things we ever put out. Sales were bad on *Red Raven*. Sometimes we would drop books that were marginal just to try something that would be more successful. *(Continued on page 46)*

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The Fighting American

By Gene Reed

Captain America was the prototype of the soldier of the future. Fighting American was the prototype of the secret agent of the future. The Golden Age Cap fought the Axis. The Atom Age Fighting American fought the communists. Both were Simon and Kirby classics.

Where there's DANGER! MYSTERY! ADVENTURE! we find
The NEW CHAMP OF SPLIT-SECOND ACTION!
FIGHTING AMERICAN
APR.-MAY, 1954
10¢
with SPEEDBOY, the wonder kid
PRIZE GROUP
WHO is the FIGHTING AMERICAN? Learn his secret in this issue!

ALL FIGHTING AMERICAN © 1998 HEADLINE PUBLICATIONS INC.

The Korean conflict in the early 1950s made America acutely aware of the communist menace. Communism suddenly loomed as a frightened new national threat. And Americans quickly learned that all communists were not found on foreign battlefields either. The fear of domestic communist activity, a home grown internal menace, was at an all time high. People who were even suspected of being communists or having communist leanings were subjected to government investigation, and were often blacklisted or socially ostricized. In many cases, actual proof was not even considered necessary for drastic action to be taken. The mere suspicion that a person was a member of the communist party… or had ever engaged in "party front operations" was enough to cost many their jobs. (For many, their names were placed on a restrictive blacklist to guarantee that they would be unable to secure work.)

Those who were eventually blacklisted included actors, writers, artists, and many others who were "locked out" of their professions by fear and suspicion. It was, in short, the biggest witch hunt since the Salem trials!

Throughout all of this, comic books endured. Comics changed with the times, and tried to cater to the changing public morality. In some ways it seemed like a new hidden benefit for the industry; once comics had a common foe to fight… a unifying element they could seize on and exploit… newsstand sales increased. Even if it wasn't as large and obvious a menace as the Axis powers had been during World War II, the communist peril still gave some companies either the inspiration to develop new heroes, or pull old ones out of mothballs.

Joe Simon and Jack Kirby had created the ultimate patriot, Captain America, during the 1940s. They made him a super-soldier and pitted him against Nazis and bizzare super-villains. It seems only natural, then, that this creative team would eventually create a commie fighter during the 1950s. And thus was born Fighting American, a hero whose costume and powers bore an extremely close resemblance to that of *(Continued on page 54)*

All Fighting American text is continued on page 54

Fighting American & Speedboy!

Fighting American #1—Returning from an interview one day, Nelson and his co-worker, Mary Adams, are greeted by a man who identified himself as a government agent. The government man drives Nelson and Mary through the city and past the gates of what is apparently a military installation. Inside, Nelson sees his brother Johnny, severely beaten and suffering from several gunshot wounds. Johnny Flagg dies as his brother looks on, and even as he dies, he delivers the first of an endless number of mini-speeches against Communism.

"They're after our freedom, Nelson. They're after all men who think for themselves! They've got to be stopped—stopped—st—"

"I'll do my best, Johnny!" Nelson shouts, "I'LL SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE TRACKING DOWN THE RATS WHO DID THIS TO YOU! I swear it!" Nelson sobs.

The colonel in charge of the operation tells Nelson to report to him the next morning if he is serious about what he said. The colonel explains that the death rate of secret agents has risen alarmingly, but that America can now produce the type of man they need, *(Cont. on page 56)*

Where there's DANGER! MYSTERY! ADVENTURE! we find
The NEW CHAMP OF SPLIT-SECOND ACTION!
FIGHTING AMERICAN
JUNE, JULY, 1954
10¢
PRIZE
THEY WON'T LIVE TO TELL ABOUT THEIR VISIT TO GHOST CITY!
THROW THEM DOWN THE SKY WELL! THAT'LL TAKE CARE OF THEM!

AUG. - SEPT., 1954
FIGHTING AMERICAN
10¢
Don't laugh --- they're not funny- POISON IVAN and HOTSKY TROTSKI
PRIZE
IT LOOKS LIKE WE GAVE THEM THE SLIP, EH, POISON IVAN?

HERE COMES
Oct.- Nov. 1954
FIGHTING AMERICAN
10¢
NOT YET, COUNT YUCHA LIFFSO, WE'RE USING HIM AS BAIT TO TRAP FIGHTING AMERICAN! THAT GOES FOR YOUR PAL, SAWDOFF, TOO!
LISTEN, RHODE ISLAND RED! LET ME KILL SPEEDBOY-- JUST THIS ONCE!

The City of Ghouls!

Fighting American #2—The first of these unusual foes, Doubleheader, a weirdie with two heads and two personalities, made his appearance, appropriately, in issue #2. He was the ultimate Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. One of his personalities was refined and sophisticated, and the other one talked like a Chicago hood. Naturally they continually argue with each other. Still, the refined head is rather brilliant and invents what he calls a "telekinetic energy finger," a device that enables him to manipulate dice and fix sporting events. This little invention was created while his fellow-head was "sleeping off the effects of an overpowering salami sandwich."

Tuning in a chess set on his television scanner, Doubleheader jokingly uses his "energy finger" to move one of the chess pieces, a stunt he had also pulled a week earlier. Unfortunately for Doubleheader, one of the players is really Speedboy.

Armed with direction-finding equipment, Fighting American and Speedboy trace the high frequency signal to Doubleheader's vehicle. They leap onto the car, but are unable *(Cont. on page 56)*

Poison Ivan and Hotsky Trotski!

Fighting American #3—Poison Ivan makes his appearance in issue #3, and Simon and Kirby drew on Longfellow as their inspiration for the poem which introduces Fighting American' s newest adversary…

Listen, my children, and you shall hear,
How Poison Ivan bend your ear—
He'll say that wrong is really right,
How white is black, and black is white—
That Fighting American cannot fight,
Well, sir, that's playing with dynamite!

So bring up the curtain, hold on to your chair—

While fate plants a bomb in a Red's underwear!

A different way to open a story to say the least!

The tale opens with storyteller Poison Ivan telling American children that baseball was started by a famous Russian athlete, Kazeyat Debatkouitch in the tiny village of Byelakhukasmolyevinisk. With a name like that, it's a good thing the village was not a large one.

"All the great sports were invented by communist heroes— *(Cont. on page 57)*

Home-Coming Year 3000!

Fighting American #4—Rhode Island Red and her companions menace our heroes in issue #4. The cover of this issue shows Red lighting a cigar with a blow-torch as Count Yucha Liffso and Sawdoff menace Speedboy.

They're up to the same old communist plot—posing as an American charity or otherwise swindling money from Americans so they can advance the cause of communism. In this case, Red and her cronies are collecting agents for a Russian "aristocrat," Doraymirio Wolfirosoff, who is showered with wealth from "lovely" American heiresses vying for his attention and affection.

Wolfirosoff takes the money and drops it out his hotel window where Red, Count Yucha Liffos, and their diminutive hireling, Sawdoff, catch the cash. Catching them in the act, Fighting American and Speedboy punch out Liffso and Sawdoff. Rhode Island Red enters the battle, planting a solid kick to Fighting American's rear. Red then grabs the money and runs.

"Never turn your back on a woman, Speedboy—even an ugly one," Fighting American advises. *(Cont. on page 57)*

Super-Kahakaloveitch!

Fighting American #5 &6—Issue #5 also shows us Invisible Irving, the Great Nothing. The story opens with Irving's cell apparently vanishing.

ALWAYS ALL NEW STORIES
FIGHTING
AMERICAN
FEB.-MAR. 1955
No. 6
10¢
ZOOT! FIGHTING AMERICAN AND SPEEDBOY ARE PUTTY IN THE HANDS OF THE GREAT ALI GHAZAM!
THEY'D BETTER BE, YOU TWO-BIT HOUDINI!... OR THEY'LL SHAZAM MY DEAL WITH THE COMMIES!

"Why did you let him read those travel magazines?" a con in the next cell asks a guard.

Irving has not really escaped. Rather he has painted his cell and himself with invisible paint, something similar to the vanishing cream Popeye once used in a cartoon. Irving leads Fighting American on a merry chase until our hero kicks him into a barrel of turpentine which removes the invisible paint.

Issue #6 is notable for two things. The first is the retelling of the origins of Fighting American and Speedboy. The second is the appearance of… Super-Khakalovitch!

Super-Khakalovitch is faster than a meatball in a high wind; tougher than anybody's landlady; stronger than a year's supply of garbage! Nothing can match those credentials. It's doubtful that anything would want to. He comes from a long line of unwashed Khakalovitches. This hero of the people is in a secret chamber with lead walls ten feet thick when we first meet him.

The communists decide it's time for their hero to travel to America. Once unleashed, Super-Khakalovitch takes off in a cloud of B.O. and streaks the Arctic Circle for the U.S.A. The headlines soon scream his exploits:

DAILY YELP: Communist Superman Smells Up Flower Show

DAILY BLAH: Holiday Crowd Prostrate in Sudden Attack by Red Strong Man

DAILY-DAILY: Help! We're Choking, Shout Hundreds of People

DAILY YAMMER: Super-Khakalovitch Stampedes Cheese Festival

It is inevitable that Super-Khakalovitch and Fighting American meet. Such a menace to freedom must be contained in some way. But Fighting American is overpowered by the Russian strong man. Super-Khakalovitch is surprised that Americans dress the way they do. Instead of killing Fighting American for the cause, Super-Khakalovitch says he'll kill him for the uniform alone. Before he can complete his plans, however, a group of policeman open fire on him. Not wishing to stand up to the gunfire, Super-Khakalovitch takes the easy way out.

"Look at him!" shouts a cop, "He's diving head-first through that wall! How does he do it?"

"Fool!" sneers Super-Khakalovitch. "It's a super-trait that took me years to develop—STUPIDITY!"

(Cont. on page 58)

Gloria Swandive!

Fighting American #7—The last issue, #7, also introduces an Arabian Nights twist with the Sneak of Araby. The cover illustration for this story actually appeared

ALWAYS ALL NEW STORIES
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
FIGHTING
AMERICAN
APR.-MAY 1955 No. 7
10¢
I WONDER WHAT OTHER SURPRISES THE PROFESSOR HAS IN STORE FOR US?
FIGHTING AMERICAN! LOOK! THE HORSES HAVE SPROUTED WINGS! WE'RE RIDING FLYING MARES!
YOU L...SIR, YOU DOUBTING THOMAS! I CROSSED A MOUNTAIN GOAT WITH ALLIGATOR SHOES AND GOT AN AMBARA HIPPOPOTAMUS!

on issue #6. The story has a prophetic feel about it, as we see the Reds trying to buy all of the oil in the Middle East. Ali Bubu, nephew of the Sheik of Kishmir, tells his uncle that money from the commies will make them slaves. His uncle prefers to take that chance.

Still determined, Ali Bubu goes to Shishkabob the Sorcerer who believes their best bet is a genie. So he summons one. "He's smoke… he's fire… he bellows and snorts! Come to us, oh genie of the light brown wart!"

"All right, already!" the genie gripes. "I'm sick of your miserable routine! So what's the pitch this time?"

Ali Bubu tells the genie the problem, and the genie—powerful being that he is—whisks to America and "borrows" Fighting American and Speedboy. After encountering a little palace intrigue and exposing the communists in their "Trojan camels," Fighting American and Speedboy once more defeat the communists, this time using sneezing powder.

Not all the stories involved humurous events, and not all of

(Cont. on page 58)

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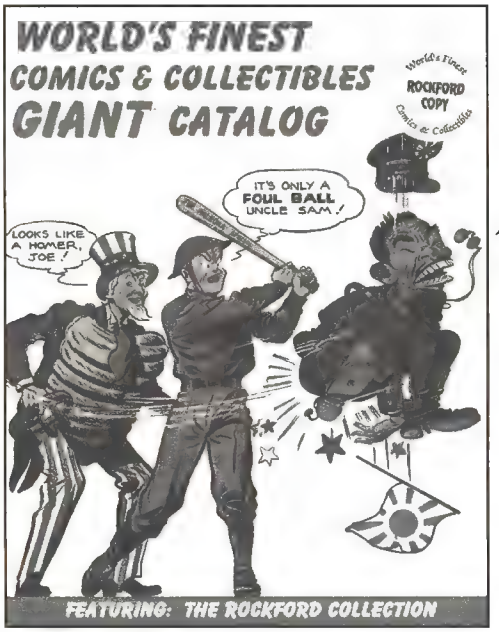

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JOE SIMON

(Continued from page 41)

Murray: *When Martin Goodman was doing pulps, they were on the sleazy side. Even his comics in the early days tended to deal in horror and torture.*

Simon: Yeah. He'd do anything. He'd watch trends. Whatever was the trend at the time, he'd put out dozens and dozens of them.

Murray: *Was that reflected in the editorial atmosphere in the early Timely comics?*

Simon: You mean the editorial direction? I was the first editor there. It wasn't any worse than anyone else. As far as the later horror was concerned, it wasn't anywhere near as bad as that.

Murray: *Who dictated all those busy, violent covers?*

Simon: That was my direction on the covers.

Murray: *How did you come to take over the other Timely books?*

Simon: Lloyd Jacquet—Funnies, Incorporated—handled the first Sub-Mariner and then I came along and took it away from them. We were doing a successful job on the stuff (putting out, Captain America and all the others) that Martin figured he'd take over the whole direction. Martin had the two big characters, Sub-Mariner and the Human Torch at Funnies, Incorporated...he just wanted us to have control.

Murray: *Did you know Human Torch creator Carl Burgos?*

Simon: Sure. That wasn't his real name. It was Schwartz, or something like that. Carl Schwartz.

Murray: *To this day, a lot of people think Jack Kirby designed the Captain America costume.*

Simon: Kirby didn't design it. I did that with Martin Goodman. We were passing sketches back and forth before Kirby was even in on it. We just gave Kirby scripts, and layouts. Before Kirby got it, we had the costume and everything. That's all Kirby got.

Murray: *Whose idea was it to reshape Cap's original shield into the round disk?*

Simon: That was John Goldwater's idea. (*Laughs*) John Goldwater threatened us with a lawsuit because he said Captain America was a copy of the Shield. He was threatening us with a lot of lawsuits, although he was a friend of Martin's. That's the way they were. We changed the shape of the shield. It turned out that we liked it even better, because Cap could throw it around.

Murray: *Tell me where did the name Bucky come from?*

Simon: From my basketball team in high school. We had a guy named Buck Pierson. We used to call him "Bucky." It sounded like a good enough name. (*Laughs*) And Rip—what was Captain America's real name? Rip Something.

Murray: *Steve Rogers.*

Simon: Okay. Who was Rip? Oh, Rip was the Newsboy Legion. Rip came from Rip Collins. He was a baseball player for the Rochester Redwings. (*Laughs*)

Murray: *Was there a specific inspiration for Steve Rogers' name?*

Simon: I don't recall that. You know, sometimes you could sit there for days to try to come up with a simple name. It's like naming a kid, you know?

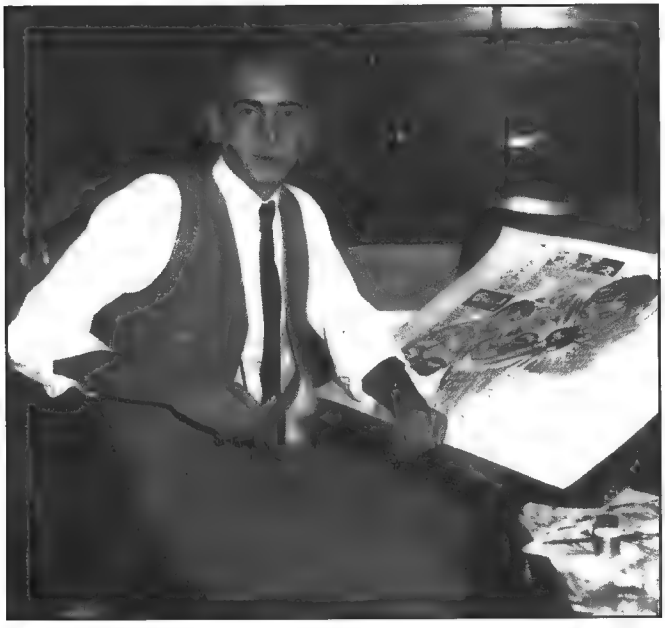
Murray: *Who developed the Red Skull?*

Simon: I did that one. It was just a weird-looking thing. It had no hidden concept.

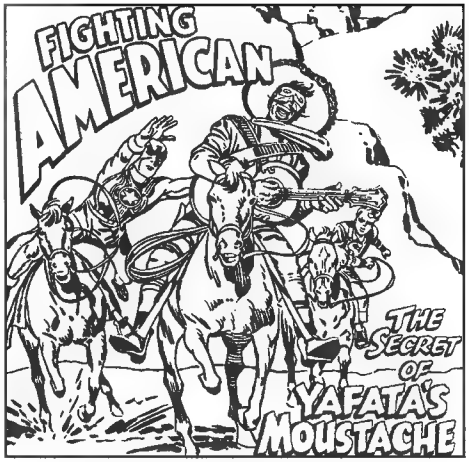
Murray: *Do you have any favorites among the original Captain America stories?*

Simon: I didn't think personally that the origin story was that unique. We just wanted to get it over with, and get him into his Captain America outfit. But I liked the idea of the private, because we were going into war at the time. I liked the military thing. God, you're asking me to remember these things that are 50 years old!

Murray: *When you left Timely, were there other editors there to take over for you?*



18-year-old Joe Simon hard at work at the drawing board at his first job...illustrator and cartoonist for the Rochester Journal American in Rochester, New York.



HOWDY, PARDNERS! COME IN AND STAY A SPELL AT BOYS' RANCH! THIS IS PURTY EXCITIN' COUNTRY, YOU KNOW! IF THE CHORES DON'T KEEP US BUSY, SOME GUN-SLINGIN' OUTLAWS OR RENEGADE INDIANS USUALLY DO.. I'M CLAY DUNCAN.. AND READIN' FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, IS DANDY - WABASH - WEE WILLIE WEEHAWKEN AND ANGEL! HOW ABOUT RIDIN' WITH US? THERE'S ADVENTURE APLENTY FOR US ALL!
SIMON AND KIRBY
BOYS' RANCH
BOYS' RANCH © JOE SIMON & JACK KIRBY

Simon: No. That was my staff there. Al Gabriele. Al Avison. Syd Shores. I left them the whole staff there.

Murray: *The Simon & Kirby studio was most famous for its patriotic superheroes. Can you tell the story of the creation of Fighting American without getting into Captain America?*

Simon: Well, they both intertwine. We were very successful at that time. We were doing *Young Romance, Young Love, Black Magic, Headlines, Guilty*—all of them tremendous hits. The romance things were selling a million a month and more…each. *Black Magic* was doing very, very well. And the crime stories were doing very well. The unique thing about *Fighting American* was that it was the first of the satirical comic books. I think Jack and Stan used that as a model for the whole new Marvel line. I think Marvel must have appreciated it more than Jack and I did. Because we had much bigger fish to fry.

We were of course, I'll say bitter, about not owning Captain America. We thought we'd show them how to do Captain America. Instead, we did *Fighting American*. So we were doing all these successful books and had a lot of money to throw around. We were partners with Crestwood Publications and doing very well. We were raking in half the money. So Jack and I decided we were going to show them how to put out a Captain America. We started out deadly serious.

Murray: *What made you decide to go the satire route?*

Simon: Now the first issue of *Captain America* had Hitler as the villain. And the whole reason we put that out was because America was in a patriotic frenzy. Also, everybody was looking for interesting villains. Bob Kane and Bill Finger and the others we coming up with some very interesting ones, and they were selling. So I thought of what kind of a villain to come up with? And there was only one that the whole world hated—and that was Adolph Hitler. So he was our villain. In fact, we had the villain first and then we came up with Captain America.

Everybody was trying to come up with big heroes at that time. Big hits. Archie had the Shield, which was very weak. We felt that they didn't know how to do superheroes. And they still don't! (*Laughs*) Captain America was so successful because of the villain, Adolph Hitler, that when we wanted to do Fighting American, we thought we could do the same thing with the Commies. That's basically the story. We were the first Commie bashers in comics.

Senator Joe McCarthy was putting a very bad rap on Red Americans. Around the second issue, the country was putting a bad rap on Senator McCarthy. So we said: Where are we? We're bashing Commies. We're bashing McCarthy. The hell with it. So we just stopped taking them seriously. From then on, it was just satirical. The first issue was like the first issue of Captain America. It was a patriotic thing. We found out we were being pretty stupid about this, or very naive. Then we changed it to a lot of jokes.

ABOVE LEFT: Fighting American takes on Mexican banditos in "The Secret of Yafata's Moustache.
ABOVE: This classic panel introduced Simon & Kirby's most unique Atom Age contribution…Boys' Ranch…and its characters Clay Duncan, Dandy, Wabash, Wee Willie Weehawken, and Angel.

JOE SIMON

Murray: *That seems to be one of the strengths of the book.*

Simon: That was one of the strengths of the book. We had a lot of fun with it.

Murray: *How did you come up with the name, Fighting American?*

Simon: I don't remember. What we were saying was: How close can we come to Captain America without getting murdered. We thought they were going to take action against us. I think they didn't because they would be embarassed in the courts because of the shabby way they treated us.

Joe Simon introduced The Shield to the Silver Age generation in The Double Life of Private Strong.

Murray: *You walked a very fine line. You did a neat twist on the origin, but it was still the same idea of taking a skinny guy, getting him strong and putting him in a star-spangled suit.*

Simon: But what other way was there to do it? I don't know, maybe we wanted them to sue us. Maybe it was a death wish, for publicity sake, or something. We probably did have that in mind, subconsciously. We probably did talk about it. I'm sure we did.

WHO IS THIS MAN? WHAT IS HE? WHAT IS THE INCREDIBLE SECRET THAT MAKES HIM THE MOST FEARSOME FIGHTING MACHINE EVER ENCOUNTERED IN THE BATTLE FOR JUSTICE?
MEET LANCELOT STRONG
THE MAN WITH THE DOUBLE LIFE!
SEE HIM HURL BOLTS OF LIGHTNING GENERATED IN HIS OWN BODY...
...GASP AT THE REFLEXES THAT DEFY THE DEADLIEST WEAPONS AT POINT BLANK RANGE!
WATCH HIM ADAPT TO TEMPERATURES IN WHICH NOTHING CAN STAY ALIVE!
FOLLOW HIM INTO UNDERSEA DEPTHS WHERE NO MAN CAN FOLLOW--BEGIN THE AMAZING, SPINE-TINGLING ADVENTURES OF THE SHIELD--A NEW AND DIFFERENT TYPE OF HERO WHO PACKS THE PUNCH OF A HYDROGEN BOMB!
DARKNESS CANNOT STOP HIM--NO MORE THAN IT DOES THE BAT, WHOSE UNCANNY INSTINCT IS MORE ACCURATE THAN RADAR!

© JOE SIMON

Murray: *Did sales kill Fighting American?*

Simon: It wasn't really that way. We were making so much money on the other stuff, we figured if this wasn't selling like a million a month, let's try something else. It had a good sale, but not a great sale. Today, it would be great. But we didn't feel that everything that made money was our favorite character. Like the romance things. Christ, we were taking money out of there like bankers for ten years. It only stopped because of the Keefauver Commission.

Murray: *Who designed the Fighting American costume?*

Simon: That was a collaboration. It's very difficult to reduce, all those stripes. The little wings on the side. When you reduce it, it's tough, but it works.

Murray: *Was Speedboy named after the Speedball pen?*

Simon: No. But that's a great story. Did they even have the Speedball pen at that time?

Murray: *It's interesting that only a few years after* Fighting American, *you and Jack reteamed to do another patriotic superhero, The Shield, in* The Double Life of Private Strong.

Simon: I think that was really one of the weakest things in our repertoire. I don't even remember it. I remember the character. There were periods after it, weren't there?

Murray: *You're thinking of* Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. *What prompted the Shield?*

Simon: What prompted that was John Goldwater just wanted us to do it. That's all. It wasn't one of our favorites.

Murray: *Did Goldwater specifically ask you to revive the Shield?*

Simon: He said, not to revive the Shield, but to give me a cross between the Shield and Captain America, and this one and that one. I never read the old Shield, frankly. I didn't like the artwork on it, and it never had anything of a sale. Hey, Goldwater wanted another Captain America, that's what he got.

Murray: *The original MLJ Shield predated Captain America by several months. Did it have any influence on your concept?*

Simon: None at all. I don't think we even gave it any consideration. Yeah, the Shield was out before Captain America. But it was an ugly costume, and pretty dead action. So that had no bearing whatsoever.

Murray: *I always liked The Fly, which you did at Archie at the same time as The Double Life of Private Strong.*

Simon: Well, if you examine it carefully, you'll see that it was really the Spider instead of the Fly. The Fly was originally called the Silver Spider, then it was taken to Marvel after we changed the name. And became Spider-Man. Stan Lee called me this year and asked me who created Spider-Man. I said: "Why do you ask?" He said that Jack Kirby in an interview with Will Eisner for his magazine said that Simon and Kirby created Spider-Man.

Murray: *Many of the powers were similar.*

Simon: Kirby told Eisner that Simon & Kirby created Spider-Man for Crestwood Publications. That was completely wrong. He just doesn't remember.

Murray: *I know it's a complicated story Joe, but walk me through it.*

Simon: The original Fly was called Silver Spider. I had done the Silver Spider for Harvey. I turned it in to Harvey in pencil. Charlie Beck did the pencils for me. Then when Goldwater was at Archie's, he asked me to do a superhero for him. I took the Silver Spider which was just languishing at Harvey's and changed the name to the Fly. I gave Charlie Beck's pencils—it was a ten page story—to Kirby and told him to change it to the Fly. So Kirby did that. So when Stan Lee asked for characters, Kirby just gave him Beck's Silver Spider! (*Laughs*) The reason I changed it was this: Harvey had seen the Silver Spider and I didn't want it to get around that they had seen it before Goldwater had. So I just changed the name to the Fly.

Murray: *Why the Fly? It's a strange inspiration for a superhero.*

Simon: I think I got that from the movie, *The Fly*. Silver Spider was what Jack Kirby took over to Stan, and then he gave it to Ditko. I spoke to Steve Ditko a couple of months ago and I asked him the story that he knows. He said Stan Lee gave him the pencils that Jack Kirby had given him, and Ditko said, "Hey, this is Simon's Fly!" So Stan said: "Well, why don't you just create a new costume."

Murray: *So your Silver Spider became the Fly, and then turned into Spider-Man…*

Simon: Ditko said that they gave him a story that was the Fly. Kirby tells me that he gave that to Stan Lee. Stan Lee was looking for new characters. And the title was changed to Spider-Man. I talked with Jack last night and he admitted that was what happened. But he said he created the costume.

Murray: *Well, Ditko has said in print he created the costume. He also said the Kirby version looked like a cross between Captain America and Ant-Man, who was created around that time.*

Simon: Well, the stuff sure looked like Ditko's.

TOP: **Three giants of the comic book industry meet during the last years of WWII… L TO R: Jack Kirby, Alfred Harvey, and Joe Simon pose for an unknown photographer in this rare and historic 1944 snapshot.**

Murray: *Absolutely. How did you and Jack Kirby work together?*

Simon: The standard way that Simon & Kirby worked was that I would write out the story on the page in longhand. Make little sketches and roughs. And Jack would take over. Finish the penciling. Then, if we had time, I would ink. If we didn't have time, we would have some people outline the pencils—guys like Charles Nicholas—and both Jack and I would throw in the blacks. Jack was great at shading, but his outlines were rough.

Fighting American and Speedboy are hurled to their doom on the cover of issue #2.

Murray: *There's a lot of confusion as to how much writing Kirby did during the Simon & Kirby days. What do you recall?*

Simon: I wouldn't let Kirby write anything. His work was very fragmentary. The last time we got together, we did *The Sandman*. I gave him complete layouts on the whole book. That was their best-selling book for several years—the first issue. And the second issue, DC did themselves. It was a real dog. It was a copy of the first issue. They used the same story, practically.

Murray: *Did you ink Fighting American?*

Simon: I think I did. I know I inked all the *Boy Commandos* too. Except for a couple stories that were inked by [Mort] Meskin. I think "Z Food" was a badly drawn strip. I was trying to figure who the hell did that thing. We had some-

body else working on it as I viewed it, but I can't figure out who it was. The strips that you see with the crosshatching are mine. I always did the crosshatching, and the heavier blacks.

Murray: *I'm looking at an issue of* Fighting American *and I see some crosshatching. What you used to call "hay."*

Simon: I had a lot of problems with DC about that. I used to fight with [Mort] Weisinger and the other editors at DC about that. They wanted me to stop it, and I'd tell them to go to hell because we had a good contract and they weren't supposed to interfere. Eventually, *Boy Commandos* became their number one best-seller, so I didn't have any more problems with that.

Simon & Kirby's Vagabond Prince (circa 1946) was the first homeless crimefighter.

Murray: *Did you know DC's Harry Donenfeld very well?*

Simon: Oh, yes. I knew him well. The guy was a complete lush. (*Laughs*) He was a printer, actually.

Simon & Kirby caricatured a Middle-Eastern potentate, complete with huka, yet wrote his dialogue to include the US military acronym SNAFU... "Situation Normal, All F—Up."

Murray: *He was a big wheel in the pulp magazine field, too. The Spicy chain was his. They say that during his pulp days, Donenfeld published some nude photos in one of his Spicy pulps and would have gone to jail except an employee named Herbie Seigal took the blame, and did the time for him.*

Simon: That's a true story. Everybody in the company when we were working there knew why Seigal was working there. He was a very sweet guy. Did you know that when DC sued Captain Marvel, I was the only artist who went on the witness stand? Jack and I did the first complete *Captain Marvel* book.

ZOOT! FIGHTING AMERICAN AND SPEEDBOY ARE PUTTY IN THE HANDS OF THE GREAT ALI GHAZAM!
THEY'D BETTER BE, YOU TWO-BIT HOUDINI... OR THEY'LL SNAFU MY DEAL WITH THE COMMIES!

VP
The VAGABOND PRINCE
TRAPPED ON WAX
LIKE THE LIVING THINGS THEY ARE, CITIES SPREAD AND GROW... AND THE ORIGINAL SETTLEMENT BECOMES THE CITY SLUM...
SUCH IS THE STORY OF SISTEN CITY... THE EAST SIDE... ONCE THE PROUD HOME OF THE SETTLER, IS TODAY THE HOVEL OF THE POOR MAN! BUT THE POOR MAN HAS HIS CHAMPION IN SISTEN CITY!
TWO MYSTERIOUS FIGURES... THE VAGABOND PRINCE AND HIS CHIEF JUSTICE... FIGHT FOR THE POOR MAN'S RIGHT TO LIVE UNMOLESTED BY MEN OF GREED AND CUNNING! THIS IS A STORY OF CRIME AND DEATH... THE STORY OF THREE MEN WHO WERE TRAPPED ON WAX!
'Tis rumored Mister Tweed has signed A true renunciation Of civic pork and every kind Of Governmental Station. By his example fired... inclined To noble emulation... The People humbly are resigned To BOSS TWEED'S RESIGNATION!
by Joe Simon and Jack Kirby

Murray: *That's right. From your point of view, did the lawsuit have any basis?*

Simon: You know, Captain Marvel won the case, but lost on appeal. Actually, Donenfeld sued Captain Marvel because he said they were the biggest competitor of his. That's the only reason he sued them—to try to stop everybody. The reason that he gave was that Captain Marvel flew without any instruments!

Murray: *Did you know Richard Hughes of the American Comics Group, which was partly owned by the Donenfeld family?*

Simon: I did know him. Richard Hughes was Donenfeld's editor before Whit Ellsworth. He went into the food business after he got out of comics.

Murray: *How about Jack Liebowitz? I understand he was the real brains at Donenfeld's Spicy pulps, and later DC Comics.*

Simon: Definitely. Oh, definitely. He was the accountant there. I loved Jack Liebowitz. Harry Donenfeld was in partnership with his brother. And they couldn't get along. Jack Leibowitz made a deal where he would take over since they couldn't come to any agreements. That's how he came to become publisher there.

Rare unused cover stat pitting Fighting American and Speedboy against "The City of Ghouls" plus Simon's satire of the comic book industry..."The Mad Inker."

FIGHTING AMERICAN
ACTION-ADVENTURE CHAMPION!!!
FIGHTING AMERICAN
25c
FEATURING SPEEDBOY
+ NEW! SURPRISE THRILLER! THE MAD INKER
I BROUGHT ANOTHER BATCH OF AMERICANS FIGHTING AMERICANS - THEY'RE SPEEDLESS!!
ASSIGNMENT: INVESTIGATE CITY OF GHOULS

Murray: *Did you know Donenfeld's partner, Frank Armer?*

Simon: He wasn't his partner. He was his distribution man. He was the one who got Martin Goodman started in comic books. All these people, Goldwater and Goodman and a lot of other comic publishers started with one publisher, Hugo Gernsback. They all worked together at his place, then they all branched out and became comic book publishers. Frank Armer was a distribution man for Gernsback, then he went with Martin Goodman—who was really Moe Goodman. (*Laughs*)

Murray: *How do you feel about the* Captain America *movie of a few years back?*

Simon: Well, they put our names in the ads. That's about all they did for us.

Murray: *What about the old Captain America serial?*

Simon: Oh, they were awful! I never saw the serial. I saw two TV movies. They were even more than embarassing. They didn't even give us credit.

Murray: *How do you feel about Stan Lee co-opting the character?*

Simon: I read that Stan Lee created Captain America in *Time, Newsweek, Newsday*—almost every publication. I felt very bitter about that.

Murray: *Did Captain America change your career?*

Simon: No. It was just another bump in the road. DC wouldn't have given us as much money if we hadn't been doing such a big seller.

Murray: *Why do you think Captain America remains so popular?*

Simon: Well, it started off so popular. It just started out great. I thought it was so superior to the other things. Our comics had more life than the others. The others looked like they were on paper. Our's looked like they were real people.

Murray: *Do you think Captain America is a viable character these days?*

Simon: Oh, more than ever. He's become like a flag. He symbolizes the whole thing.

Murray: *Would you say that Captain America is the best, or most famous, Simon & Kirby creation?*

Simon: Let me put it this way... the best art we ever did was Boy's Ranch. I think the best character we had—and probably we will have a lot of people disagreeing with us—was Bullseye. Both of them happen to be westerns. I think Bullseye was the best thing we ever did. Do you remember the origin story? It was a wonderful, wonderful western story. In the worst times, it sold very well. We were being distributed by Leader News Company. And they were doing very well because they were distributing EC Comics. Then, suddenly, during all the commotion about violence in television and the Keefauver investigation, EC Comics fell on very, very bad days and Leader News went bankrupt. They couldn't pay us. They put us out of business. Otherwise, it was selling very, very well. It was like a miracle. They had beautiful covers.

Murray: *Do you remember Boy Explorers?*

Simon: I didn't care too much for it.

Murray: *Is* Brother Power, the Geek *something you'd rather forget, too?*

Simon: *The Geek* was doing very well. It had a very good sale. They had a lot of politics at DC—they used to have; I

Close-up of cover art without cover slugs.

JOE SIMON

don't know if they still do. Weisinger was one of the editors there. He was very jealous of myself and Kirby. And he told Jack Liebowitz that The Geek was a drug-oriented story, because it was about the Hippies. And that's the reason they dropped it. Infantino was an editor there at the time, and he remembers the story very well. He was telling me that it had a terrific sale. It was just politics.

Murray: *Most people don't know that you created the* Challengers of the Unknown *with Jack Kirby as one of the last products of the old Simon & Kirby studio before it split up.*

Simon: I did. I was talking with Roz Kirby the other day and she said: "I remember you writing that story." She said she inked it, but I don't recall that. I never saw her ink. But that was mine. After we split up, Jack took it to DC with my blessing.

One head is refined and educated... one is a gangster with a thick accent. Simon & Kirby pushed the limits of the outrageous with "Doubleheader, the most amazing villain of all time!"

Murray: *What do you remember about the Challengers?*

Simon: Nothing...that was so long ago. Christ, I can't remember what I did yesterday. We were creating concepts left and right. If one didn't work out, we came up with another.

Murray: *You worked a lot for Harvey, even into the '60s.*

Simon: The Harveys were always good to me. Whenever times were tough, Al Harvey always had work for me...doing production...covers. I did a lot of covers for them. Dick Tracy. Joe Palooka. Green Hornet. Black Cat. So many that I can't remember them all.

Murray: *What do you most remember about your collaboration with Jack?*

Simon: I don't know. It's just that we had to drive him around all over. (Laughs) Listen, we worked together. We lived together. Our families lived across the street from each other. I think we each respected the other tremendously. We made money together. What else can you say?

Murray: *Would it be fair to say that you were his mentor in his early days?*

Simon: The first time I saw his work, I admired it tremendously. I can't say I was his mentor. I can say I was Stan Lee's mentor. I hired him on orders from Uncle Robbie. He was related to Martin Goodman. I think Jack and I had our happiest days when we were doing the Crestwood books...probably because we were partners with Crestwood. Young Romance was the biggest thing in our careers. When Kirby was with me, he got a fair deal, and he made more money than he ever made in his life. When I did the copyrights—*Fighting American, Stuntman, Young Romance, Black Magic*—all these things, I included Jack in them. They were copyrights that he never expected to have in his wildest dreams. I arranged deals for the Kirbys in the last few years that netted them many dollars.

Murray: *How do you think Jack will be remembered?*

Simon: As a comic book innovator. He was one of a kind. You know, Jack's whole life was comic books. And he was great at it. I don't know what else you can say about him. The one thing that struck me about Jack is I could give Jack a script and I could give the same script to some other really terrific artist. Jack's work would come back, and it would be alive! The other guy, you'd have to throw it out because it wasn't even a story. They couldn't tell a story the way Jack did. That's my impression of Jack.

As far as the drawing, everybody knows his action, and his extreme perspective and everything else. A lot of people in the business tried to copy it. I don't think anybody even came close.

We had a lot of fun. We had great times together. We had our studio in Tudor City. He was very nice. He always said nice things about me. He never put me down.

Murray: *Did you miss comics at all?*

Simon: Not at all. My problem with comics is that they've got a bunch of very polished artists now, but they don't have the incentive or the creativity that they used to have. Not because we were better, but because this isn't required of them.

Murray: *A lot of them are making their living off other's people's characters, including your own.*

Simon: Yeah. God bless 'em.

Murray: *What was the most satisfying thing about doing comics?*

Simon: Smoking cigars. The money was really the most important thing, but we did have a good time. Comics were a lot of work. But when you look back at all the stuff you've done, you say: How could I possibly have worked this hard? And then you think back and say: Well, maybe we did a couple of pages a day. It wasn't so bad.

Murray: *Well, I guess that wraps it up. I sure appreciate your time. You've been very generous.*

Simon: Okay. It was fun remembering these things. You asked some good questions. It made me think again. I'm really ashamed of myself for remembering all these things. (*Laughs*)

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The Fighting American

Continued from page 42

Captain America, even down to depicting Cap's shield emblem on Fighting American's chest. The new champion also had a boy companion, Speedboy, a counterpart to Bucky, and hopefully, a "relatable" attraction for younger readers.

To understand the "psychology" of Fighting American, you must first understand some of its cast of characters. Even though the first issue tries to remain serious, the names of the characters and the dialogue foreshadow what is to follow. Johnny Flagg, a crippled newscaster, is a patriot who is always alerting the American people to communist schemes. In doing so, he naturally makes quite a few enemies. He is a war hero who was "a brilliant student—a prize athlete," to quote the words of his brother, Nelson Flagg.

In contrast, Nelson Flagg is frail and does the research and legwork for Johnny's newscasts. Nelson expresses a desire to be a fighting man like his brother, but he is cast in a Clark Kent-like role, seemingly meek and wanting to stay away from physical danger.

Fighting American lasted only the seven issues, from April-May 1954, to April-May 1955. Simon and Kirby produced the first four issues by themselves. In issue #5, however, it appears as if Mort Meskin is doing some ink work. Bob Powell's inks are evident in issue #6, and Powell penciled and inked "Sneak of Araby" and "Three Coins in the Pushcart" in #7.

It would be nice to be able to pinpoint writing credits, to say for certain that Joe Simon wrote this story, while Jack Kirby wrote that one, but the writing and plotting styles of both men are so similar that it's almost impossible to separate the writing on any particular adventure.

Fighting American and Speedboy returned briefly in October, 1966, when Harvey Comics tried to establish a superhero line. There was some new material prepared for the book, but the majority of the issue consisted of reprints from the earlier Fighting American title.

Knowing that the communist menace had lost punch over the past eleven years, the editor reprinted the stories with the least amount of propoganda. The Harvey comic introduced Round Robin, a rotund criminal who bounces around. Fighting American and Speedboy trick him into jumping into an armored car full of starch, where he becomes stiff as a board. The rubbery rogue is then rolled away to jail. This story was framed around Fighting American's origin, reprinted from the first issue.

One other new story, "The Secret of Yafata's Moustache," has Fighting American and Speedboy traveling to Mexico to search for Harvey Nibble, an American believed to be a prisoner of a Mexican bandit, Yafata. Finding Yafata, Fighting American discovers that the bandit is actually a Mexican freedom fighter. Yafata tells Fighting American to cease his search for Harvey Nibble. Those words and the fact that Yafata's moustache almost falls off when a girl kisses him, convince our hero that young Nibble is in good hands.

The 1966 Fighting American also featured "Roman Scoundrels" a story that appears to have been written and drawn several years later. It also reprinted "Duel to the Finish Line," "Doubleheader" and "League of the Handsome Devils."

Although there were previews of *Fighting American* #2, the issue never appeared.

Fighting American may have been a predominantly humurous hero, certainly a predecessor of the wise-cracking heroes Kirby was to draw for Marvel in the 1960s, but Simon and Kirby still kept the basic serious message: "Communism is a definite threat and we must be ever ready to fight it." Oddly enough, Fighting American never actually encountered his real foe. He constantly preached against the ideal of communism, but the closest he could ever get to it was confronting the various agents and pounding them to pieces. There was no way America's undefeatable champion could physically defeat the idea of communism.

Considering the super-serious feelings and antagonism most Americans held toward com-

Fighting American Anti-Communist Propaganda

Fighting American contained an enormous amount of extremely obvious propaganda, usually delivered by Johnny Flagg during his newscast, or by Fighting American after he had captured a group of communists or thwarted their plot. Simon and Kirby also used captions at the end of the stories from time to time. Here are a few examples:

From issue #1: "The identity of Fighting American is unimportant! What he stands for—what he fights for—that's how we must judge his true value!"

From issue #3: "Z Food." In this story the people who ate the mysterious substance were transferred into what they wanted to become. Two communist agents finally steal the Z Food and try it. They take one bite and turn into gas-filled balloons.

"Element Z sure plays some funny tricks! Is that what they wanted to become... balloons?" asks Speedboy.

"No," replies Fighting American, "that's what they happen to be! Communists! And full of hot air, naturally! Element Z may not be stable, but one can't deny that it's truthful!"

From issue #7, "Space-Face": "All earth men are confused! But after studying earth people, I've found that those who practice DEMOCRACY are closer than all others to a better way of life!"

munism in the mid fifties, perhaps Simon and Kirby took the right approach by treating it humorously. The McCarthy hearings made nervous wrecks of many Americans, but Fighting American's encounters with communist agents balanced the scales a little by helping Americans laugh at the threat. Many people lived with the fear that they might be accused of being communists, and in the comic book, the communists were transparent, operating in the open, and got the stuffing beat out of them by our hero.

But regardless of the theme of a Fighting American story, there was always an incredible amount of action! Additionally each issue was literally packed with visual gags, puns, wordplay, and in-jokes. Who else would name a patriotic hero Johnny Flagg? Who else would have named a communist propagandist Peter Piper because gullible Americans danced to his tune? And who else would even dare name a Russian athlete, who supposedly invented baseball, Kazeyat Debatkouitch? (Casey at the Bat... the "ouitch" is on the end because of the atrocious pun.)

The character of Fighting American never changed. He remained a super-patriot who continuously fought for "truth, justice, and the American way." He was always in the right place at the right time, and nobody could beat him in a fight unless they fought unfairly. His only love interest, in costume and out, was love of country. Speedboy remained a junior version of Fighting American and was a dutiful and entirely typical teenage sidekick, with only one notable exception. Speedboy never got himself captured to be used as bait in a trap for Fighting American, a habit previous sidekicks had used innumeral times before.

As for the main anti-communist theme Fighting American, it would seem in hind sight that it was too restrictive. Of course, if the hero had really caught on, he could have been transformed into a semi-serious hero fighting criminals instead of communists. (In fact, one or two of the latter stories reflect this trend). Like Captain America, however, he is a product of his time. Unlike Captain America, many comic fans and historians still debate whether or not Fighting American could be revived as a functioning hero in today's comics. It is possible that the right artist/writer team could do it, but lingering in the back of the memories of older fans there would always be the image of the "funny" Fighting American, a memory that would make it hard to accept the imitation that a serious Fighting American at the local comic shop.

However there is a little postscript. *CBM* readers will no doubt recognize the uniform of DC's STEEL, THE INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN as being very similar to that of Fighting American. Who said history doesn't repeat itself?

Well, that is the background... and now for those seven memorable, historic, and highly collectible issues.

Fighting American text for issues 1-7 continues on the following pages.

Fighting American Checklist

(sans writer/artist credits)

#1 (Apr/May 1954)
"Break the Spy Ring" (10 pgs., origin of Fighting American)
"Track Down the Baby Buzz Bombs" (6 pgs., intro Speedboy)
"Duel to the Finish Line" (7 pgs., cover story)

#2 (Jun/Jul 1954)
"The League of the Handsome Devils" (9 pgs.)
"Find the King of the Crime Syndicate" (7 pgs., Doubleheader appears)
"Investigate the City of Ghouls" (7 pgs., cover story)

#3 (Aug/Sep 1954)
"The Man Who Sold Our Liberty" (6 pgs., Square Hair Malloy appears)
"Stranger From Paradise" (2 pgs.)
"Poison Ivan" (8 pgs., cover story)
"Z Food" (7 pgs.)

#4 (Oct/Nov 1954)
"Tokyo Run Around" (8 pgs.)
"Home-Coming Year 3000" (9 pgs., a look at the future)
"Operation Wolf" (5 pgs., Rhode Island Red appears, cover story)

#5 (Dec/Jan 1954-55)
"Jiseppi the Jungle Boy" (8 pgs., cover story)
"The Year Bender" (8 pgs.)
"Track Down Invisible Irving the Great Nothing" (6 pgs.)

#6 (Feb-Mar 1955)
"Deadly Doolittle" (8 pgs.)
"The Making of Fighting American" (8 pgs., retells origin)
"Speedboy" (1 pgs., recap of Speedboy's origin)
"Super-Khakalovitch... Boy Has-Been!" (10 pgs.)

#7 (Apr-May 1955)
"Sneak of Araby" (8 pgs.)
"Three Coins in the Pushcart" (7 pgs., Gloria Swandive appears)
"Space-Face" (5 pgs.)

#1 (Oct 1966, 64 pages, Harvey)
"Round Robin/Peter Piper's Red Vipers" (16 pgs., partial reprint of the origin from Fighting American #1)
"Roman Scoundrels" (8 pgs., previously unpublished)
"Duel to the Finish Line" (7 pgs., reprint from Fighting Am. #1)
"Find the King of the Crime Syndicate" (7 pgs., reprinted from Fighting Am. #2)
"The League of Handsome Devils" (9 pgs., reprint from Fighting American #2)
"The Secret of Yafata's Moustache" (7 pgs., previously unpublished)

The Fighting American

Continued from page 42

FIGHTING AM. #1

the agent of the future, Project Fighting American.

Nelson remarks that the figure on the chart looks like his brother before he was injured. The colonel replies that it is Johnny Flagg's body, revitalized and strengthened, ready for a new occupant.

"We want you to wear that body! We want you to be your brother. It will mean the end of you as you are now!" the colonel tells Nelson.

It does not seem to matter to Nelson. He agrees, and a few days later he finds himself being prepared for the transfer. After an injection, Nelson loses all his senses except sight. He can still think, but he is completely helpless.

Young Nelson Flagg is placed in an odd-looking chair which rolls on a moving track into a huge, thick walled chamber. His chair finally stops moving as it makes connection with another—in which sits a strange costumed figure! Nelson shudders! He knows that beneath that uniform are the rippling muscles of his brother's body! The drugs have taken Nelson's power of speech, and he watches the tense movements of the men outside—recognizing among them the most brilliant scientific minds in the country.

Nelson's heart pounds wildly as he waits for the unknown. There is no sound, no pain, just the weightless sensation of rising and suddenly being everywhere at once, of watching a green ball dart frantically about on a screen outside, knowing that it is he, himself. Suddenly, the wild freedom is gone. Nelson feels adjustment! Balance and normality return. One of the men behind the glass wall speaks to Nelson, his voice filtering into the chamber through a loudspeaker.

"You can hear me in there. It's all over. You may stand up if you wish."

"Thanks."

But it is not Nelson Flagg's body that rises and speaks. It is the costumed figure of Fighting American! It should be mentioned at this point, the only thing that remains of Nelson Flagg is his lifeless body. From this point onward, Fighting American, in costume and out, speaks, acts, and thinks like the deceased Johnny Flagg. Apparently the only contribution made by Nelson was that spark necessary to get the machinery moving again.

Fighting American's first act is to go on television as Johnny Flagg and taunt the very men who killed him!

In Peter Piper's headquarters, Piper is outraged that his men did not succeed in killing Flagg. He calls the station and challenges Flagg to meet him. Piper has obviously set a trap certain to kill Johnny Flagg once and for all, but it is Fighting American who invades Peter Piper's headquarters and literally mops up the place with Piper and his men.

And with appropriate closing panels, the origin ends. The similarities to the origin story of Captain America are obvious. Similar super-scientific machinery changes a weak, underweight nobody into a super-powered, muscled hero. Captain America was the prototype of the soldier of the future. Fighting American was the prototype of the secret agent of the future. Both emerged with remarkable compatible powers.

The second story introduces Speedboy. Just like Bucky Barnes, a young boy, this time a television page boy, discovers by accident that Johnny Flagg is actually Fighting American. Together they defeat the menace of "The Baby Buzz Bombs."

From there, it's off to Europe to aid American Dan Grady and protect him from foreign agents who do not wish to see an American in the European Road Race. Dan Grady is killed, but Fighting American and Speedboy take his place and win the race. When the villains try to escape by plane, Fighting American pursues them and maneuvers them into crashing into the Eiffel Tower. Another happy ending. And on that note the first issue of Fighting American Comics drew to a close.

Multiple communist threats disposed of in a single issue. Not too bad a beginning for an ambitious new hero.

FIGHTING AM. #2

to hang on as the two-headed hood uses his "energy finger" to throw them from the car. Even though they don't get a good look at Doubleheader, Fighting American does get his license number.

Back at his office, Johnny Flagg gives the license number to his secretary Mary Stewart (possibly Mary Adams got married between issues). When Mary discovers that the car belongs to a man connected with the crime syndicate, she decides to investigate for herself. Shades of Lois Lane! She poses as a reporter, and goes to Doubleheader's headquarters, only to be recognized as Johnny Flagg's secretary. Naturally, they hold her prisoner.

Enter Fighting American and Speedboy who, what luck, just happen to follow Mary. They also manage to dispose Doubleheader's thugs in just two panels. Speedboy grabs the energy finger and immediately discovers how to use it. (This is a comic book, remember.) Leaning agains the panel border, Speedboy bounces Doubleheader up and down like a basketball. Eventually Doubleheader and his gang are turned over to the FBI, and Mary is told to stay behind her desk in the future.

As mentioned previously, some of the characters' names in issue #1 set the stage for the "lunacy" and humor that was to follow. Fighting American's origin story had a rich lady appropriately named Mrs. Van Lohded (loaded as in wealthy). The primary bad guys in the last story are named Gnortz and Bohltz (nuts and bolts). These names are compared to those that followed; adversaries with names like Doubleheader, Poison Ivan, Hotsky Trotski, Rhode Island Red, Super-Khakalovitch filled the following issues of Fighting American.

FIGHTING AM. #3

(Continued from page 43)

baseball, football, gin rummy—hide and seek—and bingo!" Poison Ivan continues.

Simon and Kirby also subtly inform the readers of Ivan's humility, referring to it three times in a single caption.

The kicker comes when Johnny Flagg begins receiving letters from twelve-year-olds who believe what Ivan has been telling them. When one of them visits the studio and gives him a Bronx cheer, Flagg decides the matter is serious and merits investigation as Fighting American. One does not go around thumbing his nose at America's heroes or the symbol of America's freedom whether he's in or out of costume.

Fighting American and Speedboy visit the kids and tell them they can prove Ivan is lying if they'll follow a plan.

The next day, the kids meet with Poison Ivan and begin a conversation.

"Why, every kid knows about Bulldog Finnegan! He beat every communist track runner in the last Olympic games!"

"Da!" agrees Ivan. "I remember it now! The prejudiced American press didn't give you the real story! They didn't print that Bulldog Finnegan is really twins! When one gets tired of running, the other one takes his place. It was a communist reporter who uncovered this Yankee swindle. But, he could not expose this trick at the time, because F.B.I. agents kidnapped him and shipped him on a banana boat to Bolivia."

The kids are a little too skeptical to swallow this malarkey, and their faces show it.

"Suppose you were to meet Finnegan! Would you tell him that?" a boy asks.

"Anytime! Anytime!" replies Ivan, probably thinking that there's no way these kids can get a great runner to confront him. "I would spit the truth in his face, the capitalist dog!"

One thing you don't do in a Simon and Kirby story, Ivan, is use careless metaphors!

"Okay!" says another boy. "Hey, Stinky! Bring in that capitalist dog!"

"Yeah! Here he is!" shouts Stinky. "Meet Finnegan, Ivan!"

Finnegan is a large bulldog, and it is only a matter of seconds before Ivan discovers that he has been exposed in more ways than one, as Finnegan removes the seat from Ivan's trousers.

Half an hour, thirty-six blocks, fifteen floors, and a ten foot flagpole later, Ivan and his co-worker, Hotsky Trotski, discuss their predicament and vow to eliminate the one that alerted the kids to their plans.

From his hiding place in a trash can (most fitting), Ivan discovers that Fighting American and Speedboy are behind the escapade. Unfortunately for Ivan and Trotski, they go ahead and decide to set a trap. In two and one-half pages of beautiful fight scenes, Fighting American and Speedboy give the villains the beating of their lives.

FIGHTING AM. #4

(Continued from page 43)

"STOP YOU COMMIES!"

Red and her agents escape through Doraymirio's room. Fighting American and Speedboy make the mistake of following and find themselves confronted by an army of love-starved females all trying to see Wolfirosoff. Since the Russian romeo is not around, the women decide to settle for Fighting American and his young companion. Taking the only possible exit, Fighting American and Speedboy dive through the window.

"Gosh!" exclaims Speedboy, "We've jumped out of a fifteenth story window! Do you think that was smart?"

"It's a lot less risky than taking our changes with those screwball women! Believe me, boy!" Fighting American replies. Our heroes manage to grab one of those flagpoles that are conveniently in the right place in comic book stories, and as they hang there, Fighting American expresses his satisfaction that at least they broke up "their low-down operation!" And while they're hanging there, a Red submarine is sneaking away from American shores. In the "smelly interior of the sub" we find Rhode Island Red and Doraymirio Wolfirosoff.

"How does it feel to get away from those jellyfish that pass for women, you gay dog?" Red asks Wolfirosoff.

"Women! Bah!" scoffs Wolfirosoff. "There isn't one who deserves me. I'm glad there aren't any aboard this sub!"

"Guess again, ya lovable bum!" Red replies. "I may look like a dock-walloper, but my girlish heart beats only for you! Kiss me, fool!"

"Where's Fighting American?" screeches Wolfirosoff. "I want to give myself up."

Remember folks, it's a long way from Brooklyn to the USSR, and a long time by submarine.

Since America's influence is everywhere, Simon and Kirby send Fighting American and Speedboy to the jungle where they encounter Jiseppi the jungle boy and his pet tiger Pastrami, who loves crumpets. Fighting American and a search party are trying desperately to find Jiseppi, a boy who ran away from the circus, only to find that he's been trailing them since they began their search. Not only that, but Jiseppi is carrying an H-bomb (a small one) that was planted on the island by a group of communists who want to create an international incident to discredit the United Nations. They are extremely eager to get away when they discover that Jiseppi has stolen the bomb, especially since the bomb is set to go off in a short time. With only fifteen minutes until detonation, the Reds manage to get the drop on Fighting American and escape, leaving the island to its fate.

In a race against time, Fighting American and Speedboy trail Jiseppi. When they finally, and literally, bump into him again, Jiseppi tells them that he's hidden the box that makes "pretty sounds" where no one can get it.

"I hide it... hinside big hairaplana! Itsa fly away... so now, nobody get it!"

"Jiseppi—baby boy! Think hard now," says Fighting American. "This plane... it had markings on it?"

"Shoo! Crazy words—pictures! Getchoo hands off me! Who you?"

"What kind of pictures did it have?" asks Speedboy.

"Hammer widda sickle around it! So what! Da plane—da moosic box—fly away! Nobody get it! Nobody get it!"

Fighting American and Speedboy look at each other with delight.

FIGHTING AM. #5 & 6

(Continued from page 44)

Escaping his pursuers, Super-Khakalovitch steals some loud clothes, then steals a sports car from Smiling Stan the Sports Car Man, and then goes to a restaurant where he gorges himself on hot dogs. All of this materialism has a strange effect on the Russian strongman, and he decides to become a capitalist. Suddenly, three agents of the Communist Secret Police (all wearing gas masks, by the way), appear and take him into custody.

Fighting American and Speedboy finally track Super-Khakalovitch to a turkish bath only to find that the Reds have turned against their hero of the people, and are washing him thoroughly with soap and water. FA and Speedboy quickly dispose of the hoods and help Super-Khakalovitch to his feet.

"Super-Khakalovitch—he smells as sweet as a rose!" exclaims Fighting American. "He's finished as a super-being."

"Help me," pleads Super-Khakalovitch. "I'm so clean, I can hardly walk! This also disqualifies me as a communist!"

When Fighting American asks the former walking garbage heap what happened, the Russian replies: "I began living like an American. I was never happier!"

And as I type this and look at Super-Khakalovitch's face, I see a striking resemblance to a bearded Stan Lee. Then again, there are also panels in which Johnny Flagg resembles a youthful Jack Kirby.

"Space-Face" leads Fighting American and Speedboy on a merry chase through a story in issue #7. Space-Face has the power to assume any shape. It's interesting to follow our heroes and learn how they manage to see through Space-Face's many disguises.

As they case a middle-aged man—

Speedboy: "But he's just a harmless guy we saw looking at his TV set in his apartment."

Fighting American: "Nobody would skip the TV shows to watch the commercials! After him!"

As they chase a "sweet old lady"—

Speedboy: "This time it's a sweet old grandmother. But I can't understand why she must be Space-Face!"

Fighting American: "Sure! You heard her! She hates Liberace! It's unnatural for any woman to hate Liberace!"

As they chase a young boy—

Speedboy: "Even if that kid isn't Space-Face… I'm gonna tan his hide! He thinks we're communists!"

Fighting American: "It's worse than that—he doesn't read COMICS! He's Space-Face all right!"

Fighting American: "A true movie cowboy always kisses the horse instead of the girl. You kissed the girl, Space-Face!"

Fighting American then asks the alien why he was stealing government documents, but the alien tells him he is innocent, it must have been two other guys. Of course the "other guys" are nearby, and Fighting American and Speedboy make short work (one panel) of them. Fighting American apologizes and asks how he can set things right. Space-Face has a forgiving nature, Fighting American was just a little confused about matters.

FIGHTING AM. #7

(Continued from page 44)

the stories were done tongue-in-cheek. In "Homecoming Year 3000," Johnny Flagg dreams he is a starman returning home after a long voyage to Canopus. After being lonely for so long in space, Johnny is quite eager to tell the shuttle pilot of his experiences. He tells of the various life forms he encountered and of the friendship formed with a group of aliens who worked together to fight a common enemy.

This story seems to fit with Kirby's view of the future and the concept that all mankind would be free. As Johnny Flagg says: "We'll win our fight to make every man a free man—for only free men can feel big enough to accomplish he big jobs of tomorrow." Johnny Flagg may have had the right idea.

Of course, no S&K production would be complete without at least one "kid" story. The message was not subtle. "The Year Bender" in issue #5, January 1954-55 is one such adventure.

It's the same old problem. A skinny kid falls victim to the neighborhood toughs. Speedboy resuces him and then takes him to see Fighting American. The boy's grandfather, an eccentric scientist (it should be noted here that almost all of Simon and Kirby's characters are eccentrics), expresses disbelief that the young lad would associate with "ruffians."

What gramps missed, however, was the mini lecture Fighting American has given the boy. "Showing off for any purpose won't win you any friends. Strength should be used wisely—to protect yourself—to help others."

Gregory's grandfather, Professor Dyle Twister, has invented a time machine, The Year Bender. He quickly offers a demonstration that whisks all four of them about 3,000 years into the past. Before Professor Twister can send them back, a soldier of that era plucks the Year Bender from him. Speedboy slips from a soldier's grasp, snatches the Year Bender, and runs off. Fighting American, Gregory, and Professor Twister are herded into an arena where Fighting American uses his great strength to defeat a bull. Fighting American is then confronted by a giant, who demonstrates his own strength by hurling two guards and the defeated bull over the arena wall. The professor is able to note, pessimistically, that the giant threw the bull in a very convincing way. "What will we do?" he wonders.

"There's only one thing to do," replies Fighting American, "ATTACK!"

Fighting American makes short work of the giant, and Professor Twister makes the remark, "I'll wager you can knock down an elephant."

As the elephant charges toward them, however, Speedboy comes running back with the time machine. The professor twists a dial, and the four of them are whisked back to the gym from which they started.

The professor admits that Fighting American has shown him that brawny arms can be an asset to brainy scientists. As the story closes, Fighting American, Speedboy, Gregory and Professor Twister are seen exercising.

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The Stars of STAR STUDDED

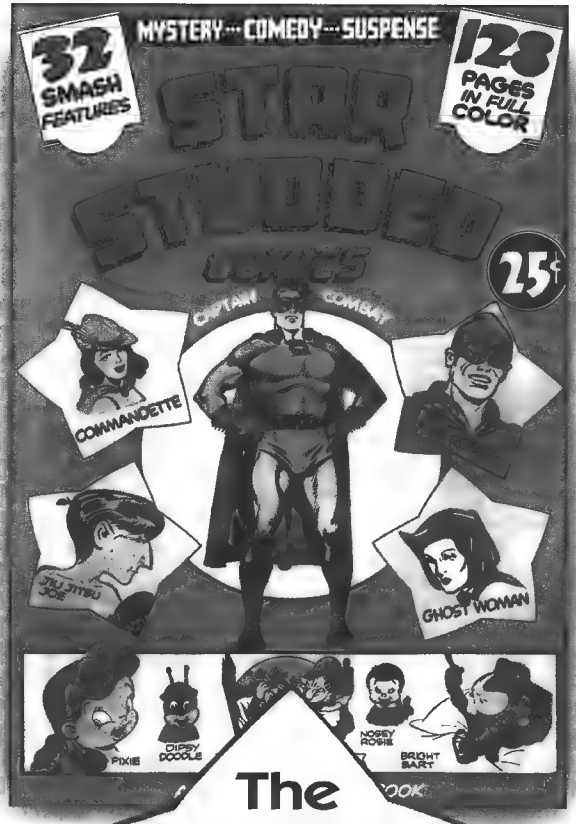
By John Fallon

How can a character get the lead feature in a book, make it look like he has a previous history and only be a flash in the pan? Well, ask the people at Cambridge House publications. Back in *CBM* #57 Michelle Nolan wrote an article entitled "One Shot Wonders!." As part of her listing, she cited the appearance of Captain Combat, Ghost Woman, Commandette, and Red Rogue in *Star Studded Comics* #1 published in 1945. All these heroes/heroines appeared only once in the entire publishing history of Cambridge House.

When I first became enamored with *Star Studded Comics* #1, I asked "How does one find out about some of these one shot wonders?" Then in March 1985, I stumbled upon a black and white reprint book entitled *Comics: The Golden Age #5* compiled by Ron Goulart. Once I read the Captain Combat story that was reprinted, I was hooked by the Meskin-ish artwork of John Guinta. That's when I started my search for the original issue in earnest. In all my years of collecting, I've only seen the book once in an auction. Right then I knew I had to have that book whatever the cost.

Eventually I located it and with book in hand (finally), I was able to enjoy the full color edition of the Captain Combat story as well as the remaining features in the book. This square bound 128 page book contains an amazing 32 features… four superhero/heroine stories, several thrillers (e.g. Secret Service Staunton) and "funny" stories (e.g. Dipsy Doodle).

What follows is a synopsis and a peak at the splash pages for collectors and researchers (at Ye editor's request) of the four superhero features…in the first, last, and only appearances of the mainstay superhero book of the Cambridge House (Bernard Bailey Studios) line of comics!

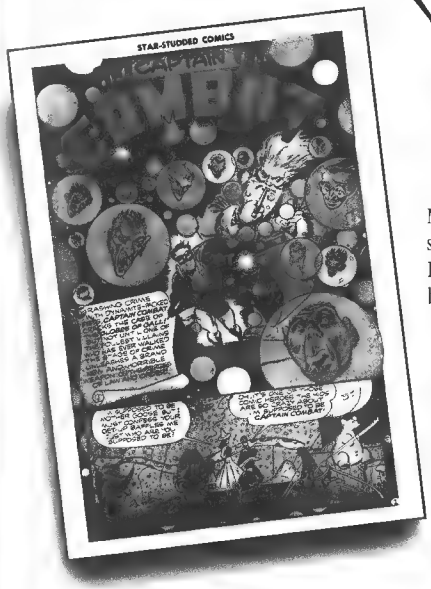


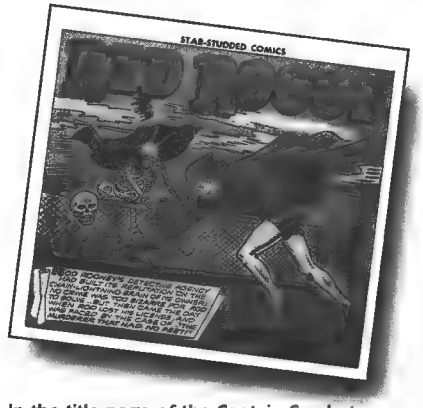
Star Studded Comics #1 dated 1945, heralds the debut of Captain Combat, Ghost Woman, Commandette, and Red Rogue from Cambridge House.

Captain Combat in "Globes of Gall"

Finding himself on a float in the middle of a Christmas parade, the inference is given that this person is just someone portraying the well known hero—Captain Combat. While changing his clothes after the parade, he hears a conversation between a crooked Santa Claus and a gang of thugs. Captain Combat now jumps into the fray and battles heroically until he is put to sleep by the bubbles from Santa's pipe.

Trussed up in Santa's bag, Captain Combat is bound for a dip in an icy river while Santa's gang awaits his return. Revived by the shock of the cold water, the Captain declares his war on crime. During the course of Santa's latest crime, he is greeted by the good Captain.





In the title page of the Captain Combat story, one can see the Meskin-ish style of Guinta on this character first appearing in Star Studded Comics #1 in 1945.

After the ensuing battle, the Captain discovers that this Santa is really one of the hired thugs in disguise. Taking the Santa Claus outfit from the thug, Combat goes to the leader's hideout in disguise. While there, one of the thugs tells the leader of how one of the bubbles killed someone. The leader's response is, "You are all killers now, so if any of you think of ducking out on me, think again!" At the same time, a policeman on patrol hears the leader's statement. When the policeman enters the room, Captain Combat makes his move.

During the battle, the lead Santa lets loose with his "bubbles of death" to cover his escape. After kicking a table at the retreating felon, Santa inhales one of his own deadly bubbles and instantly dies. With that, Captain Combat and the policeman capture the remaining members of the gang.

Ghost Woman in "Werewolves"

Traveling down a sleety road in a car with bad brakes and slick tires, our heroine races to tell her husband that their daughter is not dead. Happening upon a curve, the brakes on the car fail and the speeding vehicle plummets over the cliff. Pulling herself up after the crash, the woman is amazed that she survived the event. Making her way back to the road, she tries to flag down a passing car with no success. Laying down in front of the next passing vehicle, she is

STAR-STUDDED COMICS
Commandette
"I KILLED HIM!"
LUCKY FOR BETTY BABBLE THAT SHE HADN'T FORGOTTEN THE OLD DAYS BEFORE SHE BECAME A MO..E STAR, AND EARNED HER LIVING AS A STUNTWOMAN! LUCKY FOR BETTY...LUCKY FOR AN INNOCENT MAN...BUT VERY UNLUCKY FOR A RUTHLESS KILLER!

Clad in a white dress, high heels, a cape, mask, and Robin Hood-esque cap—Commandette battles her way into the 1945 issue of Star Studded #1.

astonished that she feels no pain as the wheels go over her.

Instantly, the scene switches to her own living room where she begins to confront her husband. As the butler walks through her and her words fall deafly on her husband's ears, she realizes that she must be dead. Distraught, husband John leaves the house to pursue a barking mad dog that is heard from the adjoining graveyard. As Ghost Woman follows her husband into the graveyard, a man with a lantern questions John as to why he is in the graveyard at night with a woman. Dismissing the man, John continues on his search asking to be left alone. The man with the lantern now realizes that he can see the ghost because in truth, all werewolves can see ghosts.

Ghost Woman is seen battling werewolves on the title page of her story found in Star Studded #1 in 1945.

Changing to his werewolf form, he begins his attack on the unsuspecting John. Intercepting the werewolf leap, Ghost Woman battles the werewolf as John looks on in disbelief. Watching the werewolf talking to no one and appearing to fight someone, John comes to the aid of his unseen benefactor by striking the werewolf in the head with a rock.

Changed back to human form, John and Ghost Woman race back to the house where Ghost Woman musters all her ectoplasm to move the old blunderbuss hanging above the mantle. With the weapon now in John's hands, the werewolf summons the remainder of his pack to attack the house. As the pack enters the house, a sterling silver fork floats into the barrel of the gun which makes John remember that werewolves can be killed by silver. Killing the leader of the pack, the others retreat. Her vows to make his life's mission the pursuit and destruction all the werewolves. Ghost Woman states "I have not died in vain! He will live and fight! Now I can rest."

Ghost Woman must have rested in peace from that day forward since she made no other appearances.

Commandette in "I Killed Him!"

Locked in a parting embrace with her love interest, movie star and former stuntwoman Betty Babble (no kidding) ends another day of film shooting. With her last line being spoken, a shot rings out on the sound stage which fells her lover. Filming ends as the director shouts "CUT!" as the scene is seemingly all part of the writer's story. As Betty and the pretend gunman complain about the lines of the script, she pauses to tell Harry the "slain" lover to get off of the floor. Then Betty discovers that someone has knifed Harry and he's really dead.

Revealing that Harry had important information for Betty concerning a blackmail ring preying on the movie colony, Betty and Ronald leave as the police arrive. While driving home, Betty and Ronald are pulled over by another policeman. While the policeman holds the pair at gun-

point, the two are informed that they are to be taken to the District Attorney.

Discovering that the policeman is a phony, Betty takes the wheel of the car and sends it smashing through a fence. While trying to escape, Betty mistakes the footsteps following her as those of Ronald. To her surprise, the phony policeman is hot on her trail. Using Jijitsu that she had learned during the course of filming her latest movie "Commandette," Betty momentarily subdues the phony and sees to the condition of the unconscious Ronald. Being shot from behind, Betty is now at the mercy of the phony policeman. Considering her dead, the phony puts Ronald's fingerprints on the gun that he used. Awakening hours later, Betty arrives in town only to be greeted by newspaper headlines that read—"Poleman (Ronald) Confesses To Double Murder." Reporting her story to the police, Betty is informed that a home movie was found in Ronald's apartment in which Ronald confesses to Harry's murder and that he was the blackmailer.

Returning to the studio, Betty confronts the writer of her movie and accuses him of being the murderer. During the time that the writer tries to capture Betty, he reveals that he kidnapped Ronald and that he's the blackmailer. Effortlessly avoiding the killer, Betty holds him at bay until the police arrive. Once Ronald is found, we find out that lines from that day's filming were spliced together in order to create the false confession of Ronald. I wonder if Betty Grable and Ronald Coleman ever had days like this?

Red Rogue in "Murderer That Had No Feet!"

After solving what the newspapers had dubbed as the "Impossible Crime," private detective Rod Rooney had his license revoked by a jealous police captain. While reading of his exploits in the newspaper, Rod is approached by Charles Arbuthnot from Transcontinental Produce Company. Requiring protection from his competitors for the next 48 hours, he plans to sew up most of the produce business in South America after signing a contract. Arriving at Arbuthnot's home, the two are greeted by his competitors Mr. Cotton and Mr. Alvarez. Informed that another competitor by the name of Zens has been found murdered on Arbuthnot's tennis court, the police soon arrive. After being thrown out of the house by the police captain, the Red Rogue appears on the tennis court later that evening. While the Rogue tries out a possible murder scenario, the captain corners the Red Rogue after the scenario fails. Held at bay by the captain, the Rogue is finally able to disarm and overcome the police captain. While fleeing, Alvarez tries to capture the Rogue by throwing bolas that will tangle up his legs. With his legs bound together, the Red Rogue falls off the roof of the house and into the swimming pool. As the captain stands poolside in hopes of capturing the suspected murderer, the Rogue exits the pool and again disarms the captain. The Red Rogue quickly informs Alvarez that he knows who the murderer is and how he committed the murder.

After Alvarez, Arbuthnot, the Captain, and the Red Rogue enter the house, only one person is noticed as missing—Mr. Cotton. Upon entering his room, the foursome discover that Cotton has been murdered as well. Returning to the living room, the Red Rogue reveals how the murders occurred. Zens was killed by ropes resembling bolas which were used to frame Alvarez. Alvarez quickly pipes up that bolas must have weights in order to work and these ropes had none. The Rogue informs Alvarez that the bolas did have weights, but they vanished. Announcing that Rooney had discovered that anyone of the four could have signed the big contract, he deduced that Arbuthnot was a liar and the murderer. Now turned over to the police captain, the captain asks about the vanishing weights. The Red Rogue's response—the weights were made of ice which melted, destroying part of the evidence.

So there you have it... one of the more interesting pages in Golden Age history. As for value, this scarce hero book is listed in the 1998 *Overstreet Price Guide* for an amazingly inexpensive price...$23 in GD, only about 70 bucks in FN...and that's for a for 1945 book! *Overstreet* also lists the NM price at $185, but I wonder if it even exists in that high a grade. If it does, I have no doubt it would go for a heckuva lot more.

A note of warning though. Collectors should be wary when buying this book as two separate issues are listed in the Guide and the contents are apparently quite different (see the entry in the *Overstreet Comic Book Guide* #28 on page 732). It's, of course, the first book (from 1945) that all the "hoopla" is referring to.

As you can tell from the splash shown on page 61, the artwork in the Captain Combat story alone is worth the price of admission. And when you add the vintage Carmine Infantino artwork in the book into to the equation, the listed GD and FN prices seem all the more reasonable. Thanks for reading and happy collecting.

INSURANCE

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THE MATT SCHIFFMAN REPORT

The more we know... the more we want!

In the first two decades of "organized fandom" few hobbyists were knowledgeable about the market. That has radically changed. Now, market-savvy collectors, speculators, and investors have become the majority... drastically moving up the learning curve. Collectors in the '60s and '70s knew Suspense #3 was a great Schomburg cover that was very tough to find. But it took another 25 years or so for the esoteric Golden Age classic to draw widespread attention! Fantastic #3, Phantom Lady #23, and other recent high-demand phenomenons continue to shoot up in price because of the increased information about their rarity and their slot in comic history.

It seems clear that the more we know about comics the more we appreciate them... and the more we want them! The Overstreet Price Guide, Gerber, Comic Book Marketplace, and other hobby publications inform and educate serious hobbyists. And it's that very information "spotlight" that is a real market-shaping force which impacts availability and value.

I often wonder if Ernie Gerber had any idea what would happen to the demand for Suspense #3 when he pictured a "ghosted" cover of the GA classic on page A-1 of his first volume? Now other issues of the title and even the entire publishing company that produced Suspense #3 is in increased demand... all because of the media exposure.

I've even heard of numerous collectors who religiously look in Diamond Distributors' monthly mag, Previews, to see what the CBM advance solicitation says... so that they know what will be covered three months from now in the hopes of finding issues before the rest of the hobby is made aware of them. It all serves to illustrate an important idea: an educated collector just has more advantages when buying and selling. And now, instead of being in the minority as in the past, the educated and informed collector dominates the hobby!

Golden Age

There are some still "crying wolf" suggesting that the Gold rush is over, and giving a myriad of reasons too. Others are proposing that the speculators have taken a break and collectors are back with a vengeance. Still others claim that there weren't all that many speculators in the first place... in spite of all the hype. I know that the collectors that I talk to are still buying, and have no intention of slowing down. The speculators/dealers that I survey are still looking for great deals. So what has really changed in the world of Golden Age?

Sales: Adventure #72 NM+ (Mile High) $25,000; Arrow #3 GD $170; Blackhawk #9 GD $375; Coo Coo Comics #1 FN $160; Detective #31 FR $800, #122 GD $350; Doc Savage #1 GD $495; Funny Pages #7 (#2) FN/VF $290; Jeep Comics #1 FN $180; Kid Eternity #1 FN $390; Marvel Mystery #2 PR $900; #32 VF $880; Mask #2 FN $550; Science Comics #2 VG $395; #8 FN $350; Shadow Comics #1 VG/FN $900; Slam Bang #3 FN/FN+ $420; Smash Comics #1 GD $380; Sparkler Comics #1 ('40) FN $250; Super Comics #2 VF $400.

Atomic Age

For some, the price of this matarial seems expensive... where else can you pay 8x Guide for a non-pedigree in FN? Pre-Code crime, horror, obscure Good Girl, oddball humor, all romance, horror, sci fi, and "unseen Gerber" are all in demand. For many Atom Age titles, obscure equates to scarce.

Sales: Bold Stories #1 FN $750; Cheerios Premium X1 VF $80; Funny Stuff #22 FN $110; Little Dot #1 FN $325; Master Comics #100 NM $175; Real Fact #6 GD $140; Romance and Confession Stories #1 FN/VF $400; Sport Thrills #14 FN $75; Strange Worlds #1 FN/VF $400; This Magazine Is Haunted #13 FN $210; Top Love Stories #18 FN/FN+ $190; Web of Evil #1 GD $80.

Continued on page 67

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I have been able to please my high grade customers with some really gorgeous Silver Age Marvels and DCs. They do sell quickly in NM condition. Horror has still been doing well... I have sold some really sharp Atlas and ECs. On the Golden Age front, Timelys and DCs have been rolling out as fast as they come in... I have sold several high grade Caps and Marvel Mysterys. Low and mid-grade books have been doing OK. I am especially happy to see strong buyers on early Spideys and FFs here. In contrast, DC Silver keys in low and mid-grade are not moving well. Low grade Horror is moving as long as it has a cool cover.

One genre of books that I have seen increased interest in is Bronze Age DC Horror and War. They are fun, pretty (at least now they are, back in the '80s people thought they were junk) and very affordable.

Some Sales: Adventure #139 (Mile High) $1,000; Captain America #21 NM (San Francisco copy) $4,200; Marvel Mystery #15, NM- $2,300, #16 NM (San Francisco copy) $4,500, #20 (File Copy) $1,700, #22 FN $435, #26 (Rockford) $1,900, #28 (Rockford) FN/VF $800, #29 (Chicago copy) $2,500; Brave & Bold #28 VF+ $3,000; Avengers #1 VF $1,200; Amazing Spider-Man #3 VF $1,100; Daredevil #16 NM $135; Fantastic Four Annual #3 NM $200; Journey Into Mystery #86 (Fin Fang Foom!) NM $575; Atom #31 NM $75; Detective #372 $60; Hawkman #18 NM $80; Lois Lane #54 NM $85, #64 NM $85; X-Men Giant Size #1 NM+ $600; Strange Tales Annual #2 NM $800.

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SEE CBM #58, PAGE 56

CBM's "Win Bates Gates" Contest Winner!

An' da winnah is...

Why I like CBM—Cover Gallery rates great plates! Market Report sates price waits! Unseen Gold states rare greats! CBM Forum expectorates reader debates! Bates Gates? Dan Kocher salivates!

—Dan Kocher, Missouri

Deez two guys is da runners up...

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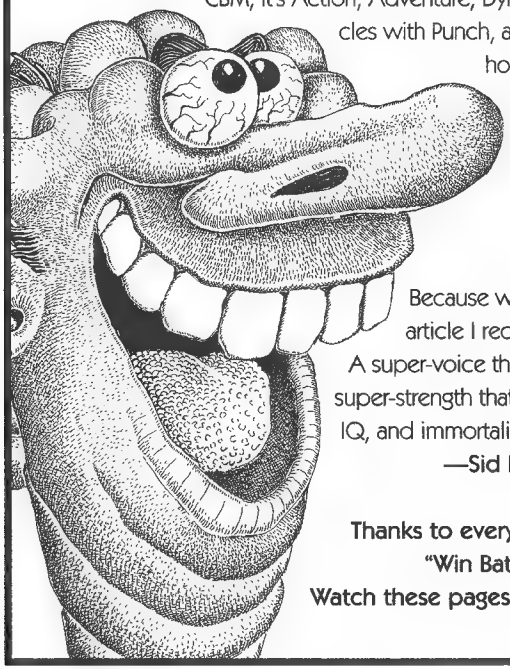
—Dan Makara, Connecticut

CBM makes collecting comic books a purely pleasant pastime for panelologists with their precisely penned pieces, making comics history no mystery for collecting connoisseurs.

—Doug Randell, California

Deez guys did good too...



CBM, it's Action, Adventure, Dynamic graphics, articles with Punch, a Great Spotlight on hobby legends. Truly a Gemstone of this Planet, simply Amazing Man!

—John Vienne, New Jersey

Because when it published my article I received superpowers. A super-voice that reached thousands, super-strength that lifted readers comic IQ, and immortality.

—Sid Friedfertig, New York

Thanks to everyone who tried to "Win Bates Gates"
Watch these pages for future contests!

MARKET REPORTS

Continued from page 64

SOTHEBY'S AUCTION REPORT

The following is a cross section of sales from the recent Sotheby's comic books, comic art, and "Madsterpieces" auction held Friday, June 5, 1998 in New York. The auction boasted an amazing $1,043,798 in sales. In contrast to what some highly vocal market nay-sayers have been suggesting in the fan press, the results confirmed what many marketplace analysts have been saying about the "new" collectors' market for some time. Others felt the auction results demonstrated "quiet strength" and a conservative market upswing as indicated by the 90% sell through.

Comic Books

Adventure #72 FR+ $345; Amazing Fantasy #15 VF+ $13,800; Amazing Spider-Man #1 NM–$12,650; Batman #1 FN–$21,850; Congo Bill #1-7 GD/FN $1,380; Daredevil Battles Hitler #1 FN+ $4,600, #1 VF+ $4,600; Detective #15 VF $1,955; Green Lantern #1 VG+ $2,990; Human Torch #2 FN $11,500; More Fun #14 FN–$1,495, #53 FR $2,300; New Fun #6 GD+ $6,900; Superman #1 GD+ $13,800, #1 GD $8,625; Uncle Sam Quarterly #1 FN $690.

Original art

Win Mortimer–original cover artwork to World's Finest #47 $10,350; Herriman–Krazy Kat Sunday Page Jan 1917 $6,325; Foster–Prince Valiant Sunday page hand colored- 1947 $6,900; Raymond–Flash Gordon Sunday page Oct 1938 $10,925; Raboy–Flash Gordon Sunday page Mar 1966 $862; Calkins–Buck Rogers daily 1945 $460; Frazetta–Johnny Comet daily Mar 11, 1952 $1,265; Kelly–Pogo daily 1957 $2,070; Windsor McCay–Dream of Rarebit Fiend 1905 $2,012; Gould–Dick Tracy daily Jan 10,1936 $2,587; Schultz–Peanuts daily Aug 27, 1952 $1,610; Boring–Superman daily 1965 $690; Hogarth–Tarzan Sunday page 1944 $4,600, Crumb–cover to The East Village Other Feb 1970 $9,775; Romita–Cover to Amazing Spider-Man #53 $12,650; Simon/Kirby–Cover Boy Commandos #24 $8,050; Infantino/Giella–Cover Showcase #14 $20,700; Kirby–unpublished Silver Surfer/Dr. Doom pencils $9,200; Swan/Anderson–cover Action Comics #403 $2,070; Tuska/Giacoia–cover Iron Man #6 $1,150; Swan/Klein–cover Action #319 $5,750.

Premiums

Double set of Superman Bubble Gum Cards #1-51 $4,600; Radio Orphan Annie Secret Guard Altascope Premium ring $2,990; Superman Movie Pin Giveaway premium $1,725; Lucky Jones Official Space Ranger Metal Pins 1952 $115.

GREG PHARIS

SAN DIEGO COMICS & COLLECTIBLES
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There has been an increase in interest and sales of back issue comics here. I mean it has been dramatic... and diverse. In the same day I have sold Airboy, Kong, Casper, Batman Adventures, Thunder Agents, Fightin' Navy, Spirit magazine, The 'Nam, Zorro, Phantom, Gunsmoke, Metal Men, and Dr. Solar. It's been this way for the last four months.

Also I recently acquired a rather large collection of fanzines from the '60s to the '80s. Fanzines such as Alter Ego, Squa Tront, Witzend, Amazing Heroes, ERBdom, Fantasy Book, Comics Feature, Comics Journal, Comics Interview, Captain George's Whizzbang, Charlton Bullseye, Marvel Mania Magazine, Foom, Chacal, Who's Who in American Comics, Gamut, and Comics Scene (to name a few). Within a week of their arrival I had sold 50% of them. I had greatly underestimated the number of people who are really interested in these!

GREG WHITE • COMICS & COLLECTIBLES

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Summer has arrived and sales have been respectable. Silver Age Marvel has been an active area. If priced at a realistic level most 1960's Marvels will find a home. DC comics are selling OK this month but still behind Marvel.

As usual Dell, Charlton, Gold Key, Archie, Harvey and ACG sell sporadically here. Golden Age books are selling well as long as the book is accurately graded and priced. Many titles do sell below Overstreet.

Golden Age and beyond (1935-55)

Timelys continue to be in demand. WWII DC covers also remain popular. Lower grade Gold will always sell much quicker. We have been sitting on a number of higher grade expensive books for a while now. Their prices seem to scare collectors away. At times I am tempted to crease or tear one of these high grade beauties just to put it in a more affordable bracket. (Then I come to my senses.) Not much Gold came into the store this month, but we did buy a very low grade Batman #1.

Recent Sales: Superman #6 GD $270; More Fun #82 VG $175; National #16 FN $225; Marvel Mystery #41 VG $200; Four Color #46 (Felix) VG $50.

Silver Age (1956-69)

Much activity this past month. Many mid-grade Marvels and DCs sold. We also moved out a large group of 1950-60's Harvey comics. Very high grade books move slow due to their price. We can sell TV and movie comics if they are discounted below Overstreet. Very few sell at full guide.

Archie books also sell well below the $50 price point. This week we purchased a full set of Fantastic Four, plus all the Green Goblin Amazing Spider-Man issues and a few early X-Men. It has been a buyer's market here for a while now.

Recent Sales: Fantastic Four #6 VG $195, Amazing Spider-Man #4 VG/FN $250, X-men #12 VF $175, Batman #164 VF $50, Green Hornet #1 GD $25, Green Lantern #40 VG $30.

Artwork & Toys

Artwork was particularly active this month with quite a few sales. We purchased a large Disneyana collection last week. Another neat group that we bought was a huge collection of match covers from the 1920s to 1940s. What great advertising pieces these were. I have never seen so many match covers in my life. I am having great fun just looking through them!

A large collection of boxed Matchbox cars from the 1960s came in also. We will certainly be able to fill out our showcases this autumn when I have a chance to work on all these collections!

Recent Sales: Mulan animation drawing $50, Frank McLaughlin JudoMaster page $75; Mickey Mouse Animation drawing $60; Superboy Aurora model in box $175; Johnny Lightning toy in box $50; Mickey Mantle Life Magazine $50.

Have a great summer and hope to see you all in San Diego!

SCHIFFMAN CONT.

Silver Age

DC Silver in FN or better is growing in demand, with Action and Detective leading the way. Some speculators have also turned their attention to high grade Dell and Gold Key books with TV or movie tie-ins, and have found some success outside of the traditional comic marketplace. Pre-hero Marvel/Atlas still has a lot of interest and is (of course) tough to find in mid to high grade. Pre-hero Marvels seem to be perennial favorites and demand continues to grow and truly high grade copies sell easily and instantly for many multiples of Guide.

Sales: Action #252 VF $175; Adventure #256 FN $150; Archie & Me #1 VF $180; Brave & Bold #34 FN $495; Eighty Page. Giant #7 FN $55; Fantastic Four #4 FN $450; #52 VF/NM $75; Forbidden Worlds #73 FN $110; Green Lantern #1 GD $250; Hawkman #1 VF/NM $450; House of Secrets #22 NM $165; #44 NM $130 I Spy #1 VF $180; JLA #1 VG $310; Metal Men #1 GD $325; Showcase #4 PR $750; 45 NM $250.

Bronze Age

This area continues to pick up steam as new collectors (as well as those switching from recent-comics to older stuff) get their feet wet with less expensive material. We are well into two years of high demand now, and not all that many significant high-grade collections have surfaced. Seems like many of these books may be more scarce than we originally thought.

Sales: Adventure #431 NM $40; Adventure into Fear #10 NM $14; Bizarre Adventures #31 NM $36; Champion Sports #1 NM $18; Charlton Bullseye #1 NM $9; Harvey #1 VF $40; Marvel Premiere #1 NM $18; Marvel Mania #1 NM $40; Marvel Preview #21 NM $15 Marvel Spotlight #2 FN/VF $35, #12 NM $18; Marvel Team Up #1 NM $100; Rampaging Hulk Magazine #1 VF $15; Ringo Kid #1 VF/NM $28; Strange Sports Stories #1 NM $18; Tomb of Dracula #10 VF/NM $45; Windy & Willy #1 VF $28.

MARKETPLACE MAIL

Continued from page 17

Jack Abel

Enjoying the latest issue of CBM (# 60), and although I am only half through with it, I did want to make note of Paul Wardle's letter re: the identity of Gary Michaels. In fact, Jack Abel was the artist using that pseudonym, probably because he was also working at DC at the time. (This was noted in Comics Interview #7. Jack Abel indeed confirmed that he used that pseudonym, as he was working at DC, the "big company" at the time, and didn't want to upset them.)

In my opinion, I always felt the Colan/Abel team on Iron-Man was exceptional. Johnny Craig did join up with Marvel in 1967/68, inking Colan (very nicely, I might add) towards the end of the Suspense run, as well as penciling some sensational solo issues. Check out their styles to compare the differences. (Incidentally, Johnny Craig inked Colan on the final issue of Tales of Suspense #99, as well as the one-shot Iron-Man and Sub-Mariner and Iron-Man #1. Look them up, they're very nicely rendered.)

In regards to Total War, I believe Paul is on the money there, Adkins himself may have mentioned it in one of his interviews, but he and Wood did work together at the time.

I really liked the Blackhawk article and look forward to reading the Crandall piece, another terribly underrated talent. I would also like to see more diversity in articles, with greater emphasis on companies such as Charlton, Dell, Gold Key, Tower, Warren, etc.

Also, while the Neal Adams reprint did not pain me all that much, I would much rather you produced an Annual, or Best of CBM to reprint your most requested articles. I think that would please most readers.

Nicholas Caputo via E-mail

Forgotten 44

Just wanted to drop you a note after having read CBM #60. First off, since mine was one of the letters that you printed regarding the reprint issue containing the Neal Adams article, I just wanted to clarify for you my feelings about reprints of CBM. I wholeheartedly encourage you to continue to make articles from past issues of CBM available. I'd just like to see it done outside of the regular monthly magazine. I feel that the monthly magazine should have new material every month and the older stuff should be available separately. I would have no problem with a CBM special like you mentioned if it contains only reprints and no new material. It's the same rub as with Trade Paperback collections of recent comics today that include a couple of new pages along with the material already published in several comics. If I have the originals, I don't want to feel like I have to buy the new edition or I will be missing something.

I'll be passing on the CBM special reprinting parts of CBM #22-27 since I have most of those issues, but I'd snap up in a minute a CBM archives like Tony Didio suggests re-presenting material from the first 21-issue run of CBM.

Second, I just wanted to thank Michelle Nolan for the article on Western Comics. I have recently become interested in the genre after reading a DC Super Giant I picked up (after reading the article about them last year). I'd love to see more especially on the DC westerns. (Michelle's article on the "Forgotten 44" has helped only to whet my appetite here.)

Lastly, in the article about French reprints by Patrick Kochanek, there is a request for help in identifying the other cover shots for the back cover of Adventures Fiction #10. I can identify one of the covers, the one on the top right entitled "Sideral," as originally appearing on Mystery in Space #44. Hope that helps. Thanks for another great issue.

Mark Billian via E-Mail

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Bravo Pat & Lou

Just want to say how much I enjoyed the Pat Calhoun column and the Planet Feature in CBM #60. The covers in the color section were outstanding and arrangement of the Planet article all around all the Planet Comics characters was a good way to handle a very complicated and lengthy topic. I love and collect all Fiction House but I especially like the Planet run the best. Pat Calhoun, Lou Mougin and the rest at CBM deserve many compliments, especially for taking on "esoteric" parts of comic history that the mainstream press would never touch. Your mag is unique in fanzine history (I've been reading them since 1966) and deserves more acclaim. Please don't change a thing and I'll remain a loyal reader.

A. S. Bodet, Idaho

Bear Mail

Recently acquired some strip art at a nearby antique mall and can't find any info on the artist. The artist's name is Ward Callum, the main character's name is Mr. Pennywise. For the life of me I can't recall the title of the strip. Any help with this mystery CBM readers might provide would surely be appreciated... Thanks,

"Bear" via E-Mail

Weisinger insults

Thanks for the tribute to Reed Crandall, a wonderful artist. It's always upsetting to note how many great, influential creators of the Golden and Silver Ages lived their lives in relative poverty and obscurity, when their far less talented counterparts of today sell far fewer comics and rake in money and adulation by the truckload.

Also appreciated the honesty of Roy Thomas and Kurt Schaffenberger regarding Mort Weisinger. Always good to see bullying and egomaniac behavior taken to task. I'll never forget a mid-'60s letters page in one of the Superman titles in which Weisinger insulted the writer of every single letter he printed!

In response to some queries in previous issues of CBM, Paul Wardle speculates that Iron Man/Gene Colan inker Gary Michaels was in fact Johnny Craig. As I'm sure many of your readers know, Michaels was actually a pseudonym for long time comics artist and production man Jack Abel.

Ted Filer wondered about an issue of Superman circa 1970 where Superman went to Vietnam. I'm sure he's thinking of "The Soldier of Steel" in Superman # 216 (May, 1969). It features a gorgeous Kubert cover, pedestrian Andru art, and Clark Kent going to Vietnam as a reporter to "mingle with the troops" and "find out about their beef with Superman." Supes never does address the question of why he didn't help end the war.

Finally, Dave Blanchard discussed the movie adaptations in The Adventures of Jerry Lewis. I found one more —Jerry Lewis # 68 adapts "The Errand Boy," with a black and white still from the movie as the cover.

By the way, love Michelle Nolan's essays on hunting down hard-to-find comics. I'm curious if she's had any luck locating Buzzy # 70 yet.

Gene Kehoe, Iowa

Rumor has it that Michelle actually found a Buzzy #70. Will miracles never cease?

Letter from Ireland!

As a longtime Silver Age and early '70's DC collector I really enjoy your magazine and it's the highlight of my monthly purchases.

As I started reading the latest issue, #59, I got no further than the editorial when my jaw dropped—John Broome will be attending this year's San Diego Convention! The same John Broome who wrote all those wonderful Silver Age Green Lantern stories and my all time favourite, the Flash! Quick book me flight to San Diego!

However, reality very quickly reared its unwanted head and with mortgage, car payments, a wife and two children to support a trip to San Diego is out of the question.

So I'm writing to you, my fellow readers of CBM, with a request for help. I am hoping that one of you who will be attending the Convention would be kind enought to get his autograph for me either on a piece of paper, which I can insert into my copy of the Flash archives (already signed by Infantino and Kubert!) or on one of his issues of the Flash which I would gladly pay for. Postage costs would also (of course) be repaid.

If anyone could let me know via CBM I'd be very grateful. Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to hearing from you. Please keep up the excellent work.

P.S. If it's not pushing my luck too far I'd also dearly like to obtain the autographs of Julie Schwartz, Murphy Anderson and Neal Adams. Thanks for any help on this.

Paul Trimble, Enniskillen, Ireland

30¢ issues

The other day I came across a box of early 1970's comics. While perusing the stacks I notice a sizable number of 30¢ issues. Then, recalling the article by Jon McClure in CBM #55, I went back through my issues to see how these faired against Jon's list. I am happy to say we can greatly update the list as follows:

Adventures on the Planet of the Apes #5; Amazing Spider-Man #155, #158; Avengers #148; Captain America #197, #198; Captain Marvel #44; Conan #62, #64; Daredevil #134, #135, #136;

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All the possible 30¢ issues may actually exist if this is any indication. CBM, keep up the great work. I love your magazine, and cannot wait for the next issue. Happy hunting and good reading.

Dr. A. P. Stone via E-Mail

Minor corrections and comments

A few minor corrections and comments, all from the letters column... Harvey did do war comics. There's Fighting Fronts, and War Front to name two (does humorous war, e.g. Sad Sack, count?). Harvey Eisenberg is the correct spellling for that artist who worked in comics from the mid '40s to the mid '60s. Great artist. (No work for Harvey comics that I'm aware of.) Gary Michaels was a pen name for Jack Abel.

Steven Rowe, South Carolina

Reed Writes

Sure that I won't be the only one to respond to Paul Wardle's guess that Gary Michaels was a pseudonym for Johnny Craig. I thought it was common knowledge that Gary Michaels was Jack Abel, one of DC's war artists of the time. Jerry Bails confirms this in his Who's Who of American Comic Books. I do agree with Paul's assessment that Dan Adkins and others may have helped Wally Wood ink Total War #1 for Gold Key. I enjoyed the article on Planet Comics and the Reed Crandall piece, especially the accompanying illustrations.

Gene Reed, Alabama

No trace of the lower price

In Marketplace Mail in CBM #60 (June 1998), Robert McSheffrey asked about other variants in Marvel Comics 1962 10¢ to 12¢ transition. I have the Gunsmoke Western #68 with the inked circle covering up the 10¢ price and "12c" [lower case c instead of cent-sign] printed below it. However, my copy of Love Romances #97 (autographed by Jack Kirby, by the way) has just the 12¢ price in a clean white circle, with no trace of the lower price.

Tom Lammers, Illinois

Who is Paul H. Sampliner?

Recently scored a copy of Adventure #103 (April 1946) which as you well know is the first appearance of Superboy in that title. A statement of ownership is in this book and it lists Paul H. Sampliner as an equal owner with H. Donenfeld and J. S. Liebowitz. This is the earliest one I have found yet. Does any CBM reader know of any earlier? Who is Paul Sampliner and is there any archive material on this seeming enigma of DC history? Donenfeld and Liebowitz are documented a lot but Sampliner has never been written about as far as I know.

Also, it just dawned on me that Adventure #103 is a direct homage of Superboy holding up a car à la Superman on the cover to Action #1. It's pretty subtle and pretty neat.

Robert Beerbohm, Nebraska

Inexpensive CBM back issues

Have been a long time reader of your magazine. Your lovely wife Lisa, got me hooked when she gave me a free copy of CBM #7 (with the Bethlehem Collection article) at a San Diego con many years back. I have reread that particu-

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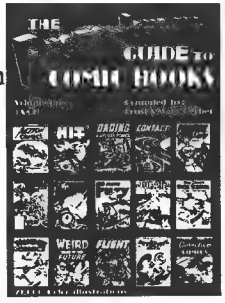

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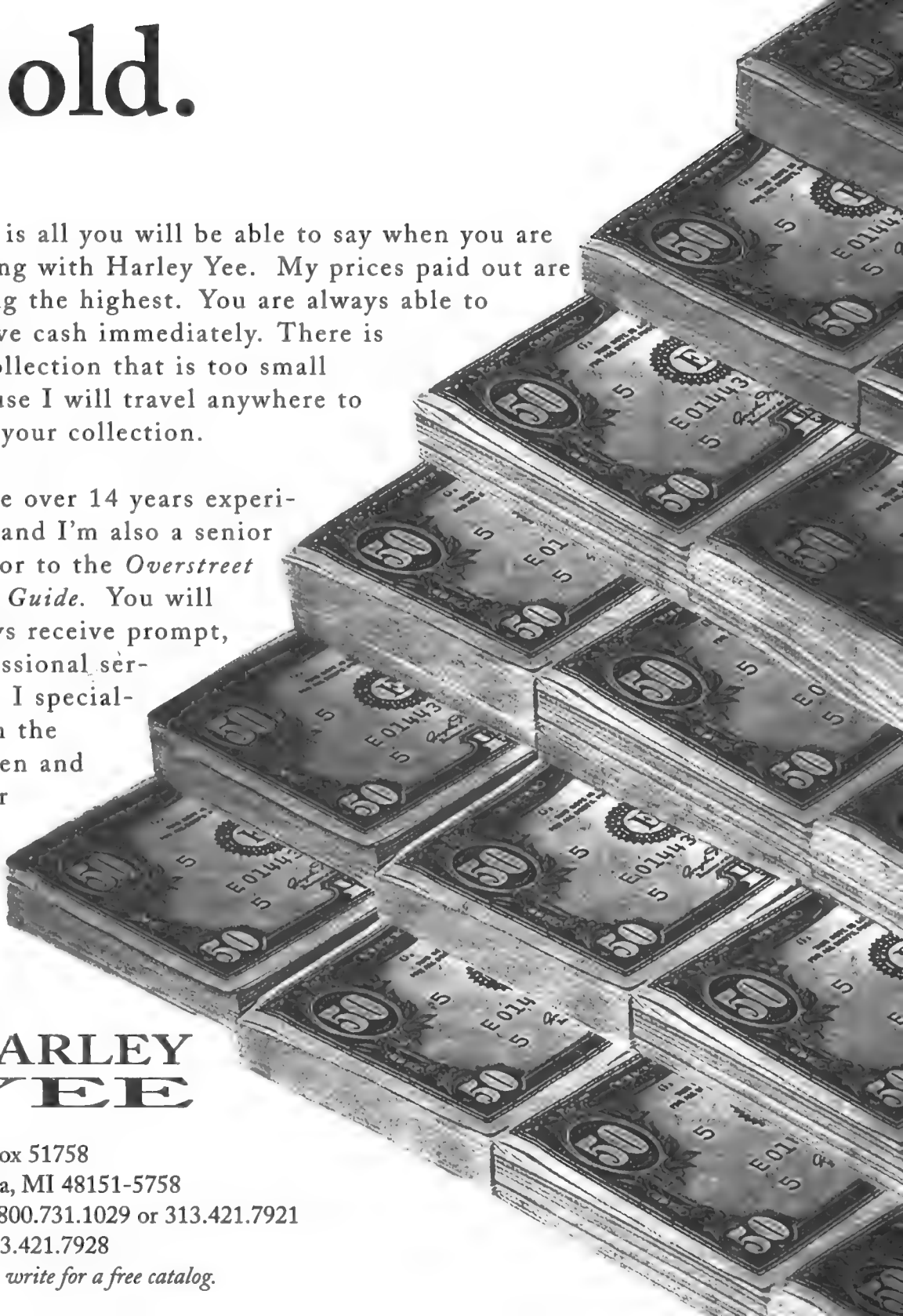

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lar article several times and every time I read it, I imagine myself as the discoverer of this lost treasure. I don't know why. I don't live anywhere near Pennsylvania, and I've never found any kind of literary or even monetary treasure before. There's just a really odd nostalgic feeling that I get when I read almost any issue of your magazine. And it's a good thing.

You have come a long way since that fine issue #7. The high gloss cover was a big step. The articles are better and better, and anything to do with uncovering lost collections, I devour. I love the color reproductions that you have added, your magazine inspired me to buy (among other things) the Gerber Photo-Journal Guides, and that led to several other purchases over the months and now years of your existence. Every time you printed something that I found interesting, I had to go in search of the books you were describing. I can't even begin to estimate the amount of money I have spent on books that I first discovered in CBM's pages.

The joys of collecting that you have taught me, are well worth the time and money that I have spent. Also the cost seems to be well worth the investment. Most of my purchases have doubled in value over the years, and are somewhat in demand. It so happens that after that issue #7 got me started, I have purchased every issue of CBM since. (I even got the back issues that I was missing.)

I still have doubles of almost every issue from #2 on up and wouldn't mind selling my extras to the hungry CBM fans out there who came aboard late. If there are any sincere readers out there (not profit takers) who are interested in some inexpensive back issues, please contact me via CBM. Keep up the good work. It's a good thing you have going on here. Thank you.

Chris McCollum, California

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At least some new material

Has been a long time since I last wrote to you but I have continued to buy your excellent magazine. I want to thank you for so quickly sending me the back issue which I had requested.

There are a couple of topics I would like to add my opinion to if you don't mind... I am in favor of occasional reprints of past materials mainly because there are articles and such you may have printed prior to my purchasing your magazine on a regular basis which I may find to my liking. I don't mind buying your magazine with material I had previously read as long as there is at least some new material added (the Kaluta Shadow cover and the O'Neil interview for issue #56 were worth the price of the magazine alone).

On the price increase of your magazine, I truly enjoy your magazine and I wait for it every month. A $1 price increase is very minimal if it means that you would be able to continue to produce your magazine without cutting back on production quality.

With that being said, I would like to thank you again for producing such a wonderful and informative product.

Thelmon Baggett, California

Great reads

Am a longtime (and very satisfied) subscriber to CBM. Please let me commend and thank you on such an enjoyable and well-done publication. There is no other publication in the comics field I have ever enjoyed so thoroughly. Your writers all communicate such enthusiasm for their topics that they fan and increase my excitement for comics reading and collecting immeasurably.

Even the articles about areas of collecting I don't participate in (pulps, Prince Valiant) are great reads due to the high level of enthusiasm and scholarship involved. I especially support your effort to document the experiences and opinions of the medium's greatest creators. I would particularly enjoy hearing even more from and about some of my personal favorites from the Silver Age (my main collecting area), including Murphy Anderson, Nick Cardy and Gil Kane, as well as other artists who have not received too much attention, such as Marie Severin and Sal Buscema. And in my opinion, the more about old romance comics and pre-Code horror, the better! These esoteric genres seem to be endless sources of kitschy wonderment.

So, thanks for such a wonderful magazine! Sincerely,

Richard Roder, New York

Half-assed attempt

First of all, I love CBM and have been a regular reader since issue #37. It's amazing in two years how much territory you've covered. Page count is roughly the same but there are more articles as well as pages devoted to features. The issue I would like to wade into is the back issue controversy (if I may call it that). I understand it is risky to reprint issues.

Why not photocopy them? If you say it's too much trouble then require a minimum of 3 or 4 copies ordered. That way your readers are happy & from what issues are bought you discern what possible spin-off features are likely to sell down the line. I don't think the one special issue is going to be seen as any more then a half-assed attempt to appease the masses (so to speak). I really hope you re-think this. Best wishes

Mike Egan via E-mail

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Advertiser's Index

All-American Comics 75
All Star Auctions 15
Argo City 75
Atlas Comics & Collectibles 75
Bedrock City Comic Co 53
Best Comics 75
Borock, Steve 76
Bud Plant Comic Art 74
Campbell, Bill 77
Carter, Gary M. 77
Chambers, Doug 78
Classic Conservations 76
Collectibles Insurance Agency 63
Collectors Slave 77
Comic Detective 77
Comic Fix 16
Comic Link 26
Comic Relief 77
Comics Ina Flash 74
Cornell & Finkelmeier 22
Dark Adventure 20
Darkhorse Comics ..... Inside Front Cover
Diamond Int'l Galleries 32-35
Diamond Int'l Galleries ..... Back Cover
Dice, Michael 74
Dolgoff, Gary 60
Eclipse Conservation 77
Eschenberg, Conrad 74
Essoe, Kelley & Joshua 76
Executive Collectibles Gallery 18
Fantasy Illustrated 76
Fantasy Masterpieces 13
Four Color Comics 9
Gerber Products 1
Graham, Jamie 76
Guide to Guides 75
Hake's Americana 27
Hamster Press 21
Harley Yee 71
Heroes 17
Hinds, Jef 4
James, Allen 75
Jim Bilakovics 72
Kalb, Ed 76
Kingdom Comics 12
Kochanek, Pat 78
Mad Morgan 14
Mankuta, John 7
McClure, Jon 77
Metropolis Collectibles 2
Nostalgia Zone 16
Nostalgic Investments 10
Pacific Comic Exchange, Inc. 11
Payette, Jim 12
Philip Weiss Auctions 69
Quasar Comics 75
Redbeard's Book Den 74
Resurrection Restorations 77
Ritter, Steve 74
Rona, Scott 78
RTS Unlimited 70
Showcase New England 65
Smejkal, Joe 3
Sobolak, Ed 14
SoCalComics 78
Sultan, Aaron 78
SuperCon 80
Superworld 72
Terry O'Neill 76
Toys from the '50s 76
Treasures of Youth 75
TriState Original Art 78
Tropic Comics 5
Vincent's Collectibles 25
Weiner, Cliff 74
Welch, David 68
White, Greg 78
World's Finest Comics 45
Xela Quarterly 74

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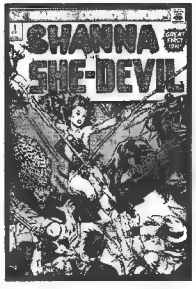

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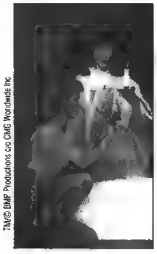

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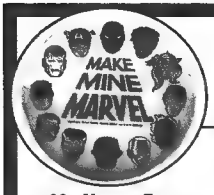

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Continued from page 80

whiter than white, this classification system is no longer valid.

While quick and decisive, classifying restoration treatments on the basis of whether the repair work is detectable or not, serves only to belittle work that does not greatly improve the overall esthetic of the object, remaining readily detectable. Thus the current system gives rise to the possibility of a restorer who does work that looks incredible (but won't last beyond 10 years) becoming the person that everyone hears about while the conscientious professional conservator that makes sure the book will last for a good long time, but is not overly concerned with the radical improvement of the over all esthetic, is relegated to the ranks of a "hack" or "amateur."

But the truth is "good restoration" does not necessarily mean good conservation. In fact, many of the techniques used in achieving a good looking restored item are often in direct conflict with the aims of conservation. Reports and evidence of "conservators of ephemera" causing extensive damage during the treatment of an item, all in order to improve the final esthetic appearance, are readily unearthed (for those taking the time to do a little honest and objective research) and include excessive cleaning, bleaching, overpainting, reglossing and the removal of original paper to improve the look and feel of a join or graft.

The truth is, some of the folks practicing restoration do not have the proper classical training for the long-term preservation of the materials they are restoring. Instead, they have received their training through secondary or even tertiary sources and their knowledge of paper's "working characteristics" was gained through a trial and error process, during the treatment of several individuals' items. Truth is, reputation shouldn't be the only criteria in selecting the person you send an item to as a person's professional qualifications should also be taken into consideration.

Qualifications should give some idea of a person's training and direct experience in the treatment of the item or item(s) being submitted. A museum trained professional whose experience is in painting or ceramics, shouldn't be considered an expert in the conservation of paper. Additionally, professional associations or memberships in associations are important qualifications, but should only be taken at face value (as almost anyone who pays their dues can become a member of an association).

What is important is that the person's qualifications are indicative of a certain high level of knowledge about the item being treated. Also, qualifications and associations should serve to support a person's commitment towards the refining of their knowledge base and their interest in keeping current on the latest developments in techniques and materials within their profession.

However, qualifications are still no guarantee that an item will be treated with the respect that it deserves and qualifications will most certainly not prevent an individual from taking risks or shortcuts during the course of an item's treatment. As can be expected, items can be permanently altered or destroyed due to ignorance, abuse or an unfortunate mistake and if this happens (and it's happened to every restorer and conservator, no exceptions) the response of the person treating your item becomes very important and very telling.

There are about a dozen or so incidents I know of (and are generally common knowledge via rumor in the hobby) where clients had their books treated in such a way as the end product looked fantastic, but when the items were returned, it was quickly discovered that the books had been altered, destroyed or mutilated. These situations were made even more egregious because all were done without the knowledge or consent of the owner. These books had been treated in such a way as to be either trimmed, bleached, deacidified, extensively recolored and in some cases, redrawn—all without the owner's approval or awareness of what was being done. The clients were not advised about what had been done to their books and only by comparing pre-treatment color-copies with the post-treatment books, then and only then was the outcome uncovered.

Anyone working in the field of restoration (or conservation) is ultimately under the employ of the owner of the item and it is the owner that should make the decisions about what is going to be done to their collectible. The owner clearly has "a right to know" what has (or hasn't) been done to their piece. The restorer or conservator who treats an item is responsible for what happens to the item during treatment, but when the person treating an item removes their accountability by lack of communication (and thus excludes the owner in the decision making process), the potential for abuse and deception is greatly increased.

What is truly unfortunate is that these important elements (communication, accountability and responsibility) are seemingly sacrificed in the pursuit of producing restoration work that is considered acceptable. When an unfortunate mistake happens, or a treatment does not work out the way it should—the restorer (or conservator) has an obligation to inform the owner of the item and advise them on what has happened and what the next possible course of action should be.

Moreover, the restorer does not have the right to arbitrarily decide what is best for the book just to preserve their reputation. Involving clients in the decision making process is the sign of a true professional, whether it be in the medical profession, the law profession, and even the conservation profession.

Determining the right person to work on your material is no doubt, a difficult matter. As more and more "conservators of ephemera" enter the marketplace, it is up to the collector to question and probe the reputation and qualifications of the person or company being considered. If your restorer/conservator gives good sound advice, is qualified to explain treatments fully, and makes sure you understand what the benefits or detriments are of each and every treatment being discussedÉ then you are off to a good start.

However, if the person you are talking to seems to just want your item, quotes you a price and doesn't make you feel like you're "in the control loop" regarding YOUR items' treatment—you might want to shop around a bit. Whether it's a comic, a movie poster or some other valued and treasured item from the past, questions about the qualifications of the restorer, questions about the treatments being proposed, especially questions about the long-term effects of the treatment should and must be asked.

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A collector's dilemma: choosing appearance or long-term preservation?

by Tracey Heft

Good restoration doesn't necessarily mean good conservation!

Everyday, someone, somewhere makes the decision to have an item restored. While the reasons for restoring an item are as varied as the approaches to restoration, one thing is certain—the owner of the piece in question must eventually decide who to trust with the treatment, care and repair of their object. Finding someone willing to restore an item is, in actuality, the easy part—as one only has to examine the *CBM*, *CBG*, and the *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* to find ads from individuals (and companies) offering restoration services. However, in this day and age where everyone and everybody offers to improve the apparent condition of an item through restoration, knowing if the individual is qualified to do the work or even if they can be trusted with the safety of your piece is a far more difficult thing to determine. In this hobby, a person's reputation is everything. Word of mouth (either positive or negative) spreads quickly as the hobby is fairly self-contained and everybody seems to know everybody else.

"Good work" gets talked about, so does work that is "terrible." According to the current experts in the hobby, "good restoration" is work that is virtually undetectable. The item in question looks like it just came off the rack with little or no damage to detract from the viewer's enjoyment of the material—in essence appearing (to use my favorite saying) "newer than new, whiter than white." Conversely, work that is readily detectable (either through the sense of sight or touch) is often denigrated as "amateur" or "unprofessional," regardless of the intentions, background or qualifications of the person doing the work.

If a person's intentions were to improve the overall appearance and esthetics of an item to a higher condition, then (and only then) does the system of classification currently used by the hobby have any validity. Indeed, in this scenario, the adage of "I can see the restoration, so it can't be good" rings true. If, on the other hand, the aim and intention of the treatment was to stabilize the item improving its condition for the benefit of future generations, and not make an item appear newer than new, *(Continued on page 79)*

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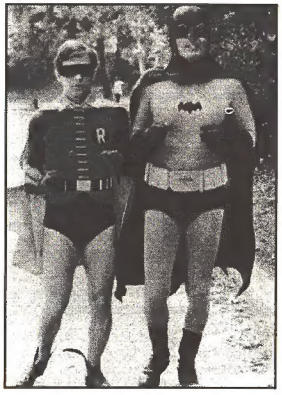

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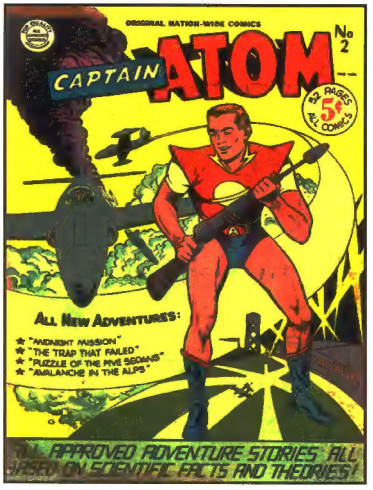
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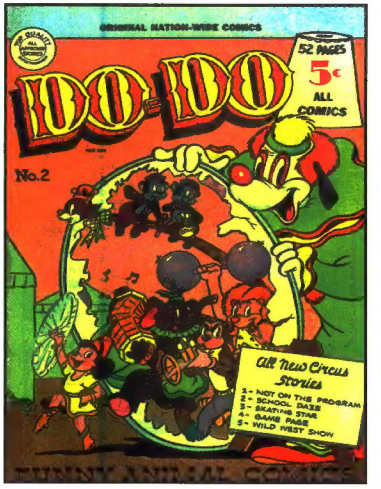
Nation-Wide's Nickel Know-How?

Contributed by Shawn Hamilton

The little-known Nation-Wide Publishers produced a line of 5¢, 5 x 7" comics that sold on newsstands from 1950-51. *Captain Atom* was their superhero offering and *Lucky Star* their Western entry (interesting today because it contains early Jack Davis art). *Mazie* went head to head with Archie in the teen humor category and *Do-Do* was their less-than-inspired (and now scarce) funny animal offering. This inexpensive 28 issue pre-Code set continues to gain interest from collectors. (Not pictured: issues #3-7 of each title).

Whether the problem was display or retailers leery of shoplifting, the four-title, seven-issue failed experiment carved out a permanent niche for Nation-Wide Publishers in comic oddity history.



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